

“**BE OF GOOD CHEER**”



JOSEPH S. VAN DYKE



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"BE OF GOOD CHEER"

BY *Mich*
JOSEPH S. VAN DYKE, D.D.

"Come, my Way, my Truth, my Life,
Such a Way as gives us breath;
Such a Truth as ends all strife;
Such a Life as killeth death.

"Come, my Joy, my Love, my Heart.
Such a Joy as none can move;
Such a Love as none can part;
Such a Heart as joys in love."

George Herbert.



BOSTON
SHERMAN, FRENCH & COMPANY
1911

BV4905
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PREFACE

This volume is written in the hope that it may aid to some extent in cheering hearts which sadness has entered.

As consolation, unlike the seeds of the forest, may readily find soil in which to take root, we are encouraged to hope that if the truths herein presented are life-germs from the Treasury of the Lord, they will be conveyed by the influences of heaven to troubled hearts and may aid in transforming gloom into sunshine. If such shall be the case, the author's labors shall have rewards which an angel might covet.

If the reader finds comforts which his heart craved, let him press the cup of sweetness to some brother's quivering lips.

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“BE OF GOOD CHEER”

I

NIGHTS IN EVERY HUMAN LIFE

The view which persons take of human life depends in measure upon temperament. Some are disposed to spend their days in moaning and their nights in gloom. If perchance their miseries are forgotten for a short time, only a caricature of cheerfulness plays over features more used to express despondency—brief smiles between long sighs. Miserableness seems to them a luxury. They shroud the world in darkness, excluding joy from their hearts and happiness from their homes. They cover heaven's vault with crape. They ignore the sources of joy that encircle them, and insist that life must be passed in a dungeon. Ask them to gaze on nature, as clad in beauty it testifies that the world is as full of the evidences of God's goodness as it is of the effects of man's sin, and they are tempted to regard you as an object of pity. Bid them remember that our Father delights in the happiness of his creatures, and they persist none the less in wearing a countenance which joy is seldom permitted to brighten.

Others, being of a cheerful temperament, are disposed to look upon the sunny side of every-

thing, and manage to discover that the sun can fringe every cloud. Elastic in spirits, they do not permit adversity to depress them. If hindered from doing what they intended to do they find pleasure in doing something else—even in doing nothing. If it storms to-day, they expect sunshine to-morrow. When forced to drink bitter waters, they anticipate sweet beverages soon. Bent on extracting good from trials, they learn that poisonous berries will make medicine, that bushes with thorns may bear roses, that orchards on hillsides produce fruit.

There are others, a third class, who are sometimes on the mountain top and sometimes in the valley—neither very long. The loftier their joy, the deeper their gloom, the former being a measure of the latter, as the height of the mountain determines the depth of the valley. Under adversity they fix their gaze upon the somber aspects of life, and under changed conditions they look exultingly upon the cheerful.

A fourth class maintain hope under all conditions, being at no time either over-joyous or greatly depressed. As a result of temperament or as the fruitage of trustfulness they are neither exalted by prosperity nor cast down by adversity.

In one form or another and at one time or

another, darkness comes to all. In consequence of diversity of disposition night comes oftener and with intenser blackness to some than to others; nevertheless, uninterrupted sunshine is the possession of none. Each is forced to exclaim, Anguish is man's inheritance—a spring of grief in every heart. Why? Is it that men may discover the provision God has made for comforting his children? Is it that we may feel the greatness of the loss which sin has entailed?

Trial may be regarded as the portion of all. The waves of a sea, lashed by tempests, brooded over by darkness and strewn with wrecks, dash against the foundations of happiness. Those submerged leave only an exclamation to mark the place where they sank. Of those that follow, some pause in their moanings long enough to shout, Gloom encircles me, indecision unmans me, loneliness appalls me. Others, setting sail in early life on waters that glitter in the sunlight, are carried into storm centers ere they are aware.

To some comes the loss of property; and in the change from affluence to poverty friends desert them, and penury deepens till they are scarcely able to procure the necessities of life. Prosperity, which they expected would be unending, has left them destitute of the qualities which might have fitted them to endure hard-

ships. Such a night came to Irene, who won the affections of Leo IV, Emperor of the Eastern Roman empire. The marriage ceremonies were celebrated with pomp, and the young empress seemed the happiest of mortals. By the will of her husband she was declared guardian of the empire and her young son. On the death of Leo, she was crowned Empress. Her life was not all sunshine, however. Her son Constantine desired to reign, and plotted to effect her overthrow. The mother flogged him. This inspired a second effort, ending in success. Darkness, however, had not yet settled upon artful Irene. By flattering the bishops she regained popular favor; and her accomplices, seizing the young adventurer and dragging him into the palace, put out his eyes at the command of Irene, who afterward tortured his helplessness to gratify her spirit of revenge. Her crimes passed unpunished. The Roman world was bowing at her feet. Kings and conquerors kissed her tinsel slippers. When she moved through the streets of Constantinople the reins of her milk-white horses were held by nobles. Call no one happy, till the grave claims its own. Without warning the tempest burst. Constantinople is in tumult. The temper of the populace makes it evident that Irene's protracted day of prosperity has ended. On petition, the Senate

spares her life. Her prayer for an honorable retreat and a decent maintenance was answered in the negative. Driven into exile she earned a precarious living by spinning and selling the products of her toil in a market where her presence was unwelcome. On an island, dreary and desolate, night settled down upon Irene.

To others comes failing health. They are, by consequence, unequal to the duties which confront them. Days passed in pain and nights in weariness force upon them the conviction that life's future is clouded. Their eyes lose luster; their walk, elasticity; their voice, cheerfulness; their spirits, buoyancy. Gloom encircles them, struggles confront them, fears pursue them, clouds overhang them, the grave yawns beneath them.

There are those to whom foreboding in reference to the future of society brings a night of gloom. They ask, Is not society retrograding?—are not crimes becoming more frequent?—are not the sterling qualities oozing out of human character? The student of history is disposed to answer, The world is advancing; there is less cruelty, less duplicity, less ignorance, less superstition, less treachery, less disregard of the rights of conscience; more principle, though not enough to warrant us in believing that the millennium has dawned; more religion, though it does not yet threaten to

abbreviate the life of communities; more charity, albeit the queen of the graces has not erected a throne in every heart; more honesty, more truthfulness, more sobriety, more safety to life and property; happier homes, kinder husbands, more affectionate wives, more obedient children, more self-sacrificing friends and more intelligent citizens; nevertheless, human nature is still capable of uttering falsehoods, of practicing dishonesties, of showing unkindness and of wallowing in bestiality. Human nature is still unchanged, only veneered and varnished—underneath, hideousness.

Even to those whose day of satisfaction with self has been lengthy there may come a night of remorse. Transgressors of divine laws may find a lesson in the biography of Constance II, one of the emperors who ruled during the six hundred years of the decline of the Eastern portion of the Roman empire. He was crowned at the age of twelve. Seated on the throne, he was tortured in a few years by the fear that his elder brother might conspire against him. Consequently, Theodosius was ordered to enter a monastery. Constance, however, soon concluded that the grave was the only place for one whose crime was a right to a throne. Hence, he murdered him; and received from his subjects the name Cain Second. Years rolled by, crowning Constance with honor, power, in-

fluence, dominion, success, riches. When at the height of his glory an exasperated people drove him into exile. He could not escape, however, from the apparition of murdered Theodosius, from whose hand he had received the sacramental cup, and whom his conscience pictured standing before him with a cup of blood in his hand and shouting, "Drink, brother, drink."

There is a night, the season of affliction, which comes to all, though with keener anguish to some than to others. They are few who have no trials to vex them, no cares to annoy them, no enemies to harass them, no disappointments to sadden them, no anguish to depress them; fewer still are they who have no bereavements to burden the soul. Sooner or later affliction's night comes to every one. A father passes behind the curtain or a mother's heart ceases to throb. A brother joins the brotherhood of another country or a sister leaves only memories around a grave; aching hearts remain behind. A husband takes up his abode in the city of the dead or a wife passes where love is undying; darkness settles upon a desolated home. The babe, folded in angelic arms, is borne to a happier clime; hot tears wet its coffin.

I need scarcely remind you that trial often comes through the waywardness of loved ones.

A father, a husband, a wife, a son—possibly a daughter—has chosen the way that leads to dishonor. Associations are becoming worse and temptations are dashing against an already enfeebled will. Friends, becoming disheartened, are relaxing efforts; the heart sickens, the brain grows weary, the eye fills with tears.

It is useless to attempt an enumeration of the trials that come to human hearts. Why assay a task so arduous? This is not a funeral sermon, not even of the kind that is seemingly destined to displacement by a praise-service. To some, the conjecture that their coffined body may excite eulogy is fitted to produce a night of sadness.

As no two are constituted alike, we should be slow to measure other people's conduct and spirit in our own bushel-basket. Possibly, we were born with more cheerful spirits than they, the star of hope being by consequence always in the zenith. Perhaps, when an enemy has trampled on us to-day, we feel certain a friend will lift us up to-morrow. When it is sunshine we are not thinking of coming storms, and when it storms we are thinking of coming sunshine. However severe the winter, we are confident the spring will come and the birds sing again amid blooming flowers. Friends will smile; night will end. Those who inherit such hopefulness are not qualified to appreciate the

efforts put forth by some to maintain cheerfulness. Why marvel that those are despondent who are imagining that matters will grow worse and worse? They are brooding over past misfortunes and anticipating new disasters. When the sun shines they are sure it shines too brightly to continue shining, and when it rains it rains immoderately. The birds that sing ought to take lessons in sweetness of song from birds that sang twenty-five years ago. When the weather is bad it is insufferably bad, and when it is fine it is a weather-breeder. If their ventures fail, it was what they expected; if they succeed, the success is meager. They look upon everything through blue glasses—even the sun's rays are bluish. Their homes are cheerless; the grass in their yards is dead or dying—been a cerulean blue all the season, several seasons, never been any other color. Their friends are selfish and their enemies unreasonable. The world has been stricken with paralysis and their native land, for which they have made so many sacrifices, is unable to raise its little finger to aid them, and would not if it could. Business has become overwhelmingly, irretrievably good-for-nothing. Frozen beneath icebergs of dishonesty its chances of improvement are as small as the mercy of a mosquito. Men have no principle, women no beauty, children no innocence, homes no com-

fort, hearts no affection, earth no fountains of joy. The optimist regards this as a case of torpid liver; and persists that he who groans might have learned to sing, or at least might have kept humming, thereby smothering sighs.

Since at some time and in some form night comes to all, and since hearts experienced in sorrow are best qualified "to speak a word in season to them that are weary," we may regard it as an evidence of divine goodness that our Father has commissioned men rather than angels to minister to us in things religious.

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II

SONGS IN THE NIGHTS OF HUMAN LIFE

Songs have marvelous power over human hearts. Rendering us forgetful of the miseries that environ us, they bear us on wings of hope to a celestial sphere, making us in spirit the companions of angels. Out of earth's worries up through the arches of the invisible they seem to waft us into an ecstasy of delight.

If songs are needed we may conclude that they have been given. Our Father has made provision for supplying our needs. Food needed: food furnished. Fuel needed: fuel supplied. Immortality coveted: immortality an inheritance of which even Satan cannot rob us. Rest ardently longed for: "There remaineth a rest to the people of God." Man desires wealth as the means of procuring future happiness. God enables him to lay up "enduring riches and righteousness in heaven"; and his greed for earthly possessions may be the perversion of a laudable desire. Have we, then, any reason to doubt whether God will sing songs in our nights? He can readily furnish a song. He can teach us to sing. He can produce such a measure of cheerfulness

as shall prompt us to give expression to our joyousness.

Who giveth songs? God, our Maker. If the song is given by him who created the soul, who is the Master Musician, who covets its music, who proffers us the opportunity of singing "the song of Moses and the Lamb," then may we be sure that the song will soothe our hearts and inspire undying hopes.

To whom are these songs given? To all who are able to say, "God, my Maker." None are so despondent that their Maker cannot inspire the spirit which will prompt them to sing. None are so girt round by temptation that the Almighty cannot give them a song of deliverance. None have attained such heights of goodness that they do not need a song of praise to the mercy of God. Songs for all, for those of a melancholy temperament and for those of a cheerful, for those who are hopeful and for those who are despairing, for those who are on the hill-top, and for those who are in the valley.

"Songs in the night." The sweetness of a song is enhanced by the time in which it is sung. It has increased inspiration as it comes through the stillness and darkness of the night. Whispering of a time when life's shadows shall be succeeded by noonday, it awakens life, love, sympathy and hope. Songs in the night of

poverty, in the night of failing health, in the night of remorse, in the night of affliction, in the night produced by the waywardness of loved ones—in every night however intense the darkness, and however numerous the clouds which produce it.

It ought to be to us a source of joy that our Father wears a title so significant, "He who giveth songs in the night"; for nights come to all, brief to some, reaching down to the grave of others. As the measure of darkness which, in the absence of the sun, comes to each is dependent upon conditions, so the amount of trial which comes to anyone is determined in measure by his surroundings. Hence, we are not fitted to estimate accurately the poignancy of the griefs that come to others' hearts. There are fountains of anguish upon which our eyes are not permitted to gaze. Some springs empty their waters through visible channels, some through invisible, some have no outlet, and their waters become bitter. One conceals his grief; another pours his tale of woe into every listening ear.

Each name and each phrase by which our Maker is designated produces its own impression on the soul. When we think of him as The First Cause, The Infinite, The Ultimate of all Ultimates, we are filled with awe. When we contemplate him as The Just and Holy

One, the source of authority, the center of excellency, the fountain of goodness, the judge before whom all must appear, we are prompted to bow at his footstool and exclaim, "God be merciful to me a sinner." When we meditate upon his eternity, omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence, immutability, we are forced to ask, "Who can understand the Almighty unto perfection?" If we pause to think of him as making provision for man's redemption, as inviting wanderers to accept forgiveness, as proffering endless joy without money and without price, gratitude is prompted to whisper in accents of prayer, "May Christ dwell in our hearts by faith; that we being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge." When we regard him as a companion of earth's sojourners to the beyond, as lifting up those who have fallen by the way, as reviving the faint, refreshing the weary and singing songs of joy during nights of sorrow, we are swathed in emotions which language is incapable of expressing. There is no season of perplexity, no night of grief, no period of gloom in which He is not ready to give needed comfort.

Are the burdens which poverty entails depressing the spirits? For this night God has

given songs. If we were to expunge from the Bible the passages which contain comfort for the needy we should find the character of the book changed to no inconsiderable extent. Indeed, abundant is the encouragement given to this class of persons. Consequently the Gospel has won its greatest triumphs among those who were poor in the things of this world, but "rich in faith towards God." Nor need we marvel at this, for the Saviour addressed them with tenderness. Not only in the New Testament, but as well in the Old, we find messages to the poor. In the 68th Psalm we read, "Thou, O God, hast prepared of thy goodness for the poor." It cannot be said that God has not provided for the poor till it has been proved that all the possible products of the soil, judiciously distributed and savingly used, are insufficient for the maintenance of all.

In things spiritual, as well as in things temporal, God "hath provided of his goodness for the poor." In their spiritual welfare Christ was interested. To them He spoke with tenderness. In their homes He displayed His power. From them He gathered disciples. His apostles were fishermen. For the poor it is comparatively easy to realize the fact that worship is with the heart, not with costly raiment and glittering diamonds, not with gold and incense, not with ceremonies and genuflec-

tions. When the poor man hears God's voice demanding homage, he knows that the demand means, "Give me thy heart"; for he has little or nothing else to give. It is also easier for him to cultivate a spirit of dependence upon God than it is for those who have tutored themselves to rely in all things upon efforts of their own. Are we not justified then in saying that those who form the purpose of becoming religious after they have acquired wealth would do well to remember that those who are without piety in the season of poverty are likely to be destitute thereof in the day of prosperity? If he does not covet God's presence in the cottage, why should he flatter himself that he will implore the forgiveness of sin if he is permitted to reside in a mansion? He ought to find no difficulty in believing that the agriculturist at the plow, the mechanic at the bench, the lawyer at the bar, the merchant at the counter, and the housekeeper at her occupations, may not only grow in the graces of the Spirit but are especially well situated to exemplify practical Christianity.

I need do little more than remind you that in the night produced by failing health, God giveth songs. He who feeds the ravens, clothes the lilies, counts the hairs of our heads, and notes the falling of a sparrow, will furnish a song for those who find the earthly house of

their tabernacle crumbling to decay. To them, the word of the apostle may have special sweetness, "We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." "These light afflictions which are but for a moment shall work out for me a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

Those who are filled with forebodings in reference to the future of human society ought to observe the footsteps of God in the history of the world. Having done this they ought to have no difficulty in believing in human progress. The world is working upwards to a higher form of civilization. Religion is becoming more intelligent and more general. It is true, disheartenment may temporarily weigh down the soul as one gazes upon ignorance, superstition, bigotry, cruelty, duplicity and unreasonableness. We should bear in mind, however, that Christ is risen and his resurrection is a pledge of the triumph of truth. To Him The Father has said, "I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." The sea of human society may continue to heave and foam and hiss for centuries to come, but He who calmed the waters of Lake Gennesaret will quiet its billows in his own time. Wars

shall cease. Idols shall crumble to dust. Superstitions shall perish. Cruelty shall give place to kindness. "The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."

To such as have a night produced by a sense of personal sinfulness, our Father sings songs whose sweetness is unparalleled. In Isaiah we read, "I will pardon their iniquities:" "Come, now, let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." So abundant in Scripture is the testimony to God's willingness to forgive sin that the penitent ought to have no difficulty in catching the notes of pardoning mercy. The Psalmist exclaims, "Bless the Lord O my soul and forget not all his benefits: who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingness and tender mercies." "There is forgiveness with thee that thou mayst be feared."

I need do no more than remind you of the

Saviour's song of pardoning mercy, "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest."

In affliction—one of the departments of God's training school—the listening ear can catch a song which is fitted to produce cheerfulness and resignation. Nor will it be difficult to discover those who, taught by experience, are ready to testify, not only to the sweetness of the songs their Maker gives, but to the fact that the sweetness is enhanced by drawing near the hand that holds the rod. If burdens drive us to him, if human enmity induces us to seek divine love, if waves of adversity prompt us to rest on his bosom, we may succeed in cultivating such a measure of resignation as shall enable us to thank him for whatever He sends—most, perhaps, for the severe. Forth from the fire the tried ones come purified, chanting the songs taught them in the furnace. A mother, bending over her babe and imprinting kisses which elicit no answering smile, is heard whispering between sobs, "The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord:" "It shall not return to me but I shall go to it." Or, in an apartment whose stillness is oppressive stands one whom we imagined no grief could unnerve. Lo! crushed in spirit, he is endeavoring to learn the song which his Father is repeating to him, "As thy day thy

strength shall be:" "My grace is sufficient for thee:" "My strength is made perfect in weakness:" "These light afflictions . . . shall work out a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory:" "If ye suffer with me ye shall also reign with me." Experiences of bereavement are so common, however, and songs fitted to produce resignation are so numerous, and occasions which furnish for them avenues to the soul are so many, that I need do no more than remind you that no matter how deep the gloom of sorrow's night, our Maker can furnish comfort. Why then should man be less cheerful than the bird which in winter sings its carol though its mate lies buried in the snow and no crumb is obtainable. May we not sing with the Psalmist, "This is my comfort in my [present] affliction, that Thy word hath quickened me"—hath in past afflictions revived my spirit.

III

SUNSHINE, BUT A CLOUD: A CLOUD, BUT SUNSHINE

North of Palestine lies a country, known from remote antiquity as Syria. Its most ancient and most important city, Damascus, beautiful for situation and a highway of commerce, was in the center of a fertile valley famed as one of the temporary dwelling-places of Abraham on his protracted journey from Ur to the land of promise; and one of whose villages, tradition says, was the birthplace of his faith in Jehovah.

At the time wicked Ahab and idolatrous Jezebel were occupying the throne of Israel, Benhadad II was king in Damascus. Of his army Naaman was commander-in-chief, who, if the testimony of Josephus is received, acquired honorable position as a reward of having slain Ahab in his chariot by an arrow sped by a "bow drawn at a venture."

By virtue of the office he held and the military skill he displayed, Naaman's commands were obeyed by the army, his influence with the monarch was great, his participation in the government of the state was flattering to his ambition, the reception accorded him in the capital was brilliant and the estimate in which

he was held throughout the kingdom was such as most men would regard—before it was acquired—as a guarantee of happiness; but he was a leper. He was no doubt the possessor of riches, his residence a palace. His servants may have been obsequious, his children honorable, his wife affectionate, his friends considerate and the king appreciative of his services; but he was a leper. He had strength of character, a strong will, a clear intellect, a well-informed mind; and may have been compassionate, forbearing, forgiving, gentle, affectionate—was certainly liberal; but he had a loathsome, incurable disease. He was a great man, but neither health nor happiness was perfect. His life was sunshine, but a cloud.

He might reverse the picture, it is true; and by so doing might keep himself from sinking into hopeless despondency. He might exclaim, “I am a leper; but I am a man mighty in valor.” His life was a cloud, but sunshine.

Over every human life, however bright the sunshine, a cloud may come. We all covet success, but, being unable to agree wherein success consists, we differ in our covetings, some coveting one thing, some another; some, character; some, riches; some, fame; some, pleasure; some, ease; some, health; some, domestic felicity. No one realizes all his ambitions—indeed, some are not worth realizing. Whatever may be the

aspiration of each, and however near he may come to realizing it, there is always something to mar perfection of joy. There are possibilities of suffering in every physical frame; spots weaker than others in the strongest bar of steel; the capability of being tarnished in the purest silver; the liability of dullness even in polished gold—spots on the sun.

Though a person may have an unimpeachable character, its strength is not such that Satan cannot break it down. Throw the largest California pine across a chasm and you have a bridge capable of sustaining an enormous weight. Nevertheless, there are burdens under which it will go down as speedily as the reed before a tornado. Those who are morally strong are not exempt from the injunction, "take heed lest ye fall." Whilst some, a favored few, may be strong along many lines and weak along but few, and others, the majority, may be weak along many lines and strong along but few, there are none who are unconquerable along all lines. The honest man may be penurious; the industrious, reckless of health; the strong-willed, obstinate; the economical, illiberal; the good-natured, indolent; the temperate, censorious; the just, unmerciful; the truthful, uncharitable; the affectionate, passionate. Types of goodness are as various and as numerous as are the persons who are

capable of possessing moral character. Perfection is something upon which the human eye has not yet been permitted to gaze, except in the person of Christ. It does not follow, however, that we may abandon all effort in the formation of Christian character. The painter does not produce his best pictures by making no effort because he is forced to concede that a perfect picture has never been painted. The sculptor does not do his best work by doing nothing and assigning as a reason, No sculptor ever carved a perfect statue.

Our Master recognized man's inability to attain perfection, but he also recognized his capability of indefinite improvement. He announced himself a teacher sent from God, to instruct men in character-building. Man's capabilities are measureless, and the point at which each may arrive during his earthly sojourn is determined by (a) The point from which he starts, that is, the amount of moral power he inherits, race progress being a fact: (b) The extent, the constancy and the sincerity of the effort he puts forth: (c) The grace of God in the heart. Is the savage of Patagonia capable of improvement? Assuredly. Is he likely to become pre-eminent for goodness? No: for he is the victim of moral weakness inherited from a long line of debased ancestors. May his descendants be brought, in

the lapse of time, to occupy as high a moral plane as that on which the Anglo-Saxon now stands? Why not? May not each human race be brought to say with Paul, "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect, but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus"? Each is capable of indefinite improvement. Religion has the power of improving society to an extent greater than has yet been effected under the most favorable conditions.

No perfection: constant progress. Continuously improving: never reaching the highest state possible. Here are two parallel lines running eastward, one starting ten feet farther westward than the other. Imagine each extended eastward indefinitely. Will they not be continuously becoming nearer the same length? At what point would you be justified in saying, They are now exactly the same length? To all the moral attainments of human beings there may be appended, Excellent, but not perfect. It takes but an atom of filth to soil a white surface. "Dead flies cause the ointment of the apothecary to stink." "Little foxes spoil the vines."

A person attains financial success, but his health is gone, or domestic happiness has taken its departure, or bereavement has opened a

fountain of anguish in his soul. Successful in some lines, he is unsuccessful along others. It takes but little to render a person miserable. It takes much to render some happy. Since it needs little to prevent wealth from rendering us contented, it seems strange that so many, in order to secure it, are ready to sacrifice health, comfort, reputation, character, principle, conscience and even the hope of happiness in the beyond. After acquiring what they covet, they may find themselves afflicted with a disease worse than that of Naaman—incurable selfishness.

We may regard it as an evidence of the goodness of God that He has placed us in a state in which happiness is not dependent upon the possession of riches. Were it otherwise, few could be happy. As it is the majority may—Bushman in Africa, serfs in Russia, slaves in Siam, Esquimos in Greenland, Indians in Alaska, laborers in coal mines and invalids on a bed of pain. God invites and enables all to possess riches of character. Do you marvel that Christ said, "A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things he possesseth." Does the river consist in the driftwood it is carrying to the ocean? Fine clothes and a fine equipage and a fine residence cannot make a merry heart.

Of those who covet fame, some—a small

number—win the prize; but cares increase, responsibilities augment, disappointments multiply and arrows of envy become keener and more numerous. Indeed, their unselfishness may kindle fires of persecution, and their loyalty to right may be a pledge of future anguish. He who courts public favor courts a fickle damsel, one who, disqualified to bestow happiness, may flatter littleness and condemn greatness. There are few sadder chapters in history than those which record the disappointments and the reverses of many whom the world has pronounced great. Mighty men they were, but they were not exempt from trials. Moses was a great man, but he was forced to leave Egypt and spend forty years in exile; an illustrious legislator, but all Israel murmured against him; a good man, but he was not permitted to enter the land of promise. Elijah was a rare specimen of greatness, but Ahab's folly and Jezebel's hatred came near driving him to suicide. Between fighting for right and fleeing from wrath, his earthly journey was one that few would covet. Daniel was a great man, but for his species of greatness Babylon's king deemed a lions' den the fittest place. Isaiah was a man of exceptional strength of character, but Manassah laid him between two planks and sawed him in twain. The apostles were mighty men of valor, but many of them

died martyrs. Socrates was a nobleman of the first order, but Xantippe was a thorn in his side.

Such as desire to see the emptiness of human greatness should read the biographies of the emperors who ruled at Rome and Constantinople during the decline and fall of the Roman Empire. They may be thereby prompted to offer the prayer, Permit me to live in obscurity. And to some politicians of the present day we might say, "Thy god has cast thee off." Mighty men—some of them leprous. Was Christ giving counsel unworthy of notice when He said, "Be humble"? The man who is on his back in the cellar can get no lower—one advantage. The man on the house-top may grow dizzy and, falling, may terminate his exalted career. Most persons desire to be on the mountain-top; few prefer the valley, though the winds are less fierce and the storms less violent. For solid comfort the lowly walks of life are preferable. Seemingly, Christ so judged, for He walked along these; and, associating with the common people, exclaimed, "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted." Naaman, lofty in station, a leper. His servant, the Jewish maid captured in war and reduced to slavery, probably had quite as much happiness as he. It may have taken much less to make her happy.

How painful the contrasts which life presents.

Here is one who has acquired what he strove for, competency. Lo! his health having failed he is incapable of enjoying it. Another is in health, but poverty is crushing his spirit. A third is pursuing pleasure, but is tortured with apprehensions of the consequences. The occupant of a palace finds himself the target for "the flings of domestic infelicity"; whilst his neighbor, living in penury, has a measure of home-joy which an angel might covet. Another, dwelling in a cozy cottage and the recipient of the respect of all, is bearing unseen burdens and sighing for relief. He to whom long life comes finds shadows and loneliness. Across the street is one who, nearing the curtain with pleasing memories of worldly success, happy surroundings and a large bank account, has no remembrance of communion with God, no religious associations and no treasure "laid up where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt."

It is evident that Naaman's case is not peculiar. Many besides the commander-in-chief of the hosts of Syria have had, and many now have, a life which may be characterized as sunshine, but a cloud. Many, though happy in some respects, are miserable in others. Their lives are successful and unsuccessful, cheerful and despondent, good and bad, great and contemptible, honorable and despicable.

Reverse the picture. A cloud, but sunshine.

Naaman a leper, but "a mighty man in valor." On every human life, however dark the overhanging cloud may be, sunshine may rest. If the cloud can cast its shadows on the mountain summit, so can the sun dart its rays into the valley. If there is no place which trial may not enter so neither is there any place which joy may not fill. If there are drawbacks in life, there are also compensations. Burdens on every human heart, and no heart but has occasion to thank God for blessings. A crook in every lot and no crook so tortuous that it may not conduct to heaven. Darkness on every pathway, and no pathway without sunshine at least a part of the time. A burden on every life, and no soul that may not thrill with joy. It is never so dark that it can be no darker. Discouragements are never so many that there are no grounds for thankfulness. There are no trials without their alleviations. Poverty, even though severe, is not an unmixed evil. It inspires energy, fosters self-reliance, promotes humility, increases sympathy, summons to exertion, aids in the cultivation of endurance and, enhancing the estimate placed on blessings enjoyed, diminishes the disposition to murmur over the absence of blessings whose presence was coveted. Ill health has its alleviations. It forces attention to the laws of health, and, by consequence, tends, in many in-

stances, to promote longevity. It sweetens the disposition by wooing us to hold communion with God. It prompts us to attend to the interests of the coming life and enables us to appreciate its nearness. Bereavements have compensations. A blessing seems to accompany each. Friends are more affectionate. God seems nearer, heaven dearer, character more valuable, the heart softer, the disposition sweeter, faith stronger, religion more precious and resignation more commendable. Obscurity and physical disabilities have advantages. Envy shoots fewer arrows at the unknown than at the known. Storms beat less violently in the secluded nooks than on the peaks of the mountain range. There are few storms in the valley of the Nile, but the head of the Storm-King, Ruwenzori, is shrouded in clouds, drenched with rains and swept by winds. The deaf are saved from hearing much that is better unheard. The blind can see no frowns, detect no sneers and be pained by no ugliness. The lame are excused from running errands, and are commended for movements which would receive censure in others. Those who are unable to read are saved from a vision of the degradation to which a sensational press can descend. Those who know nothing of mathematics are not called upon to calculate eclipses. Those who are incapable of appreciating music are

saved from being pained by discords. Those who are too cowardly to defend their own rights may come to see that they have few rights left worth defending. Those who are maligned for not giving to the undeserving poor may comfort themselves by the remembrance that they have something for the deserving poor. The man who is not able to make eloquent speeches is not liable to be ruined by adulation as many an orator has been. The person who is not qualified to make money by speculation has occasion to thank God that there are other avenues to success, quite as honorable and no more hazardous. The prison-guard who is too feeble to be appointed guardian of the condemned criminal who is awaiting the day of execution is delivered from hearing the pious gush which is dispensed to one who never felt one twitch of remorse for his crime till he found himself confronting its consequences.

It is well to observe that, all things considered, each person's lot in life is not as different from that of others as is often conjectured. One has more of this and less of that; another, more of that and less of this. In sources of happiness the difference is not as great as it seems. No life is without its fountain of joy; no life without its stream of bitterness. The mountain has both rocks and

sunshine; the valley floods as well as waving harvests. The eye that sheds tears can beam love. The feet that tread paths of sorrow can stand in God's house. The hearts that throb with anguish can thrill with love. The spirit that gropes in chambers of despair can soar heavenwards in a chariot of hope.

Let us cultivate the spirit of contentment, teaching ourselves to be thankful for the blessings we have and prizing religion as that which ennobles character and sweetens life.

IV

OVER-ANXIETY AND ITS CURE

Why not content ourselves with the mailed warriors before us, without peopling space, as it stretches into infinity, with ghosts of trouble and phantoms of misery and demons dressed in blackness and specters with hideous features. The antagonists now confronting us are enough. To undertake the conquest in one day of all the monsters with which fancy can crowd the future is to invite discouragement, and almost ensure defeat. The lion that is fighting to-morrow's imaginary enemies to-day is lessening his chance of victory over to-day's antagonist. Victories won in the present are the best preparation for victories in the future.

Certainly. But are we to take no thought how we shall meet the responsibilities of the future? Is the future so dis severed from the present that we can afford to ignore it? Nay; to-morrow has its roots in to-day. Man's condition in eternity is determined by his conduct in time. Consequently, we are enjoined to take thought for each approaching to-morrow. Those who neglect this duty are liable to find themselves in an embarrassed condition ere they are aware of it. He who, on January

first, has no shoes on his feet and no money with which to buy them, no bread on his table and no table on which to put bread, no bed and no house in which to put a bed, will not be likely to have what he needs on January second by doing nothing but worry on January first. The great Teacher recommends forethought. He enjoins us to sow that we may reap, to work that we may have the fruitage, to serve God in time that we may have the reward in eternity. Prudence admonishes us to form plans to-day that may yield advantages to-morrow.

Forethought is commendable, but over-anxiety is heart-sickening, energy-destroying, purpose-killing, happiness-slaying, spirit-crushing. "Queen Ann died of thought"; that is, of worry; and many a woman, and not a few men, have died of the same ailment.

The subject merits attention, for the disease is prevalent. Persons liable to an attack act wisely in searching for a remedy. Many are gazing on the future to determine, if possible, whether their circumstances are to improve or to grow worse, whether health is to continue or to fail, whether hopes are to be realized or to be blasted. To extinguish apprehensions is impossible. As God has set the eyes in the fore-part of the head we are more inclined to look forwards than backwards. We are surely

justified in using reason and prudence, gifts with which He has endowed us. Why marvel then that we are disposed to forecast the future?

As each day will have its own anxieties, prudence cautions us against borrowing trouble from the future, thereby embittering a day which might otherwise be joyous; against pouring to-morrow's bitterness into to-day's cup, possibly causing it to overflow.

I. The disease and the causes which produce it.

Over-anxiety, a disordered condition of the mental faculties, is liable to attack those who are suffering from impaired digestion, nervous exhaustion, a lazy liver or an indisposition to take sufficient physical exercise. It less frequently lays its finger on the coachman than upon the occupant of the coach. It may stumble on the Esquimo in his snow-hut, but it is more likely to loiter in the palace and rest contentedly on the couch where the affluent recline. It is disposed to chase down every ambitious worldling ere it begins to gnaw at the hearts of those who live in humble surroundings or chase the deer through mountain-passes. Being in large measure a product of over-civilization, it rarely troubles the Bushman in his mud-hut, though there is no meat in the larder and no larder for meat, no money in the pocket and no pocket for money, no clothes on the

back and no back inured to clothing, no vessel in which to wash the face and no face that was ever subjected to washing, no comb with which to straighten the hair and no hair that was ever straightened out, no money in hut or bank and no use for money if he had it, no rascal who owes him anything except blows and he is so fortunate as not to know how many of those are overdue, and his enemy is in the same dilemma, for neither can count more than four, the intellect becoming confused when that incomprehensible number is reached. Still, he is almost invariably cheerful. His home is so humble that worry can scarcely succeed in finding it ere she herself is worried into disgust; and when discovered, she finds the atmosphere so uncongenial and the food on which she feeds so scanty that she soon departs without ceremony. She rarely fails, however, in finding the home of the nervous, restless, ambitious, wealth-seeking, pleasure-loving, conscience-deadening, nerve-destroying, brain-tortured Anglo-Saxon. On him she settles down and becomes a parasite, fattening on his happiness.

As over-anxiety is a disease to which the civilized portion of the human family is more exposed than the uncivilized, it would seem that the attainment of that for which we are worrying aggravates the disease, increased gains fanning the flames of unsatisfied desire. Those

in the focus of the over-strained civilization of the age need an abiding faith in God, such a measure of trustfulness as shall enable them to believe that He who clothes the lilies of the valley will clothe them; that He who feeds the ravens will not permit those made in his image to die of want; that He who furnishes a home for the cricket in the hearth will not leave industry and prudence houseless; that He who says to the waves, "Be still," will stay the heart that trusts in him; that He who is continually bringing good out of evil can sweeten the Marahs at which we are languishing and will do so ere we perish for want of sweetened waters. The need of the age is Faith in God, more Faith still, a Faith that shall transform anxieties into cheerfulness.

As consumption has its causes, so corroding anxiety has its causes. Of the many, we may indicate a few: mistaken conceptions in reference to the character of the dispensation under which we are placed, which induces us to imagine that we may lessen the trials of life by worrying over them; insatiate ambition, which is never content with present attainments as long as any fancied good is beyond reach; chronic nervousness in reference to the outcome of each new project; an indisposition to do the best that seems possible and leave consequences with God; an unwillingness to cease worrying

over what can be remedied and setting to work to remedy it; reluctance to accept what cannot be remedied and to make the best of it; blindness to the fact that over-anxiety, like over-eating, disqualifies for work; last, not least, want of resignation to the will of Him who foreordains whatsoever comes to pass.

In consequence of the progress made in determining the causes of disease, we are beginning to catch glimpses of the day when medical science shall achieve its greatest triumphs, not so much in healing diseases as in teaching people how to prevent the germs of disease from finding a lodgement in the human system. May the day soon dawn when we shall learn to remove the causes which are liable to produce over-anxiety.

Reader, it may be that you are peering into the future, trembling with anxiety and almost paralyzed with fear. Notwithstanding all your worriment, its successive days will drop at your feet like diamonds from the necklace of a queen when the string is broken. As in imagination you gaze upon each you see dark surfaces as well as bright. In a spasm of anxiety you exclaim: Which side will be turned towards me? Immediately you begin so to place yourself that the dazzling side of each may be turned towards you. You plan. You worry. You fret. Nevertheless, each jewel will drop

as causes beyond your control may determine. Some days will be sunny, some cloudy, some joyous, some sad. Be resigned. God rules. The Saviour will be merciful no matter how gloomy the day may be. There will be friends that love, and friends to love. Heaven will be no farther distant because the day is enveloped in clouds. Innocent children will be sporting and hoping, be the day what it may. No worry of yours can render a day cloudless; and if it could, are you sure uninterrupted sunshine would prove a blessing?

Like other diseases, corroding anxiety is liable to become chronic if left in unrestrained activity. He who makes no effort to resist its ravages becomes its victim. Indeed, like the occupant of a dungeon, he may come to love darkness. He may regard himself as not happy unless he is miserable. He may derive pleasure in telling his tale of woe to listening ears. For the cure of such cases, resignation to the divine will must needs take the place of rebellion. Contentment must pitch its tent upon the ruins of grumbling. Pessimism must give place to optimism. The frenzied desire to have everything as selfishness pronounces best must be displaced by a willingness to do duty and rest content with its rewards.

Confessedly, the cure of this disease is sometimes exceedingly difficult, because the causes

are not infrequently constitutional. In such cases the seeds of anxiety find a congenial soil, and great praise is due to those who are able to eradicate them. On the other hand, the person who inherited a spirit of cheerfulness is not entitled to special commendation because he does not worry. He was born not to fret. Why, therefore, should he boast of his ability to maintain cheerfulness? Content with being permitted to come to this sublunary sphere, rocked in the cradle of No-Worry, fed on the bread of trustfulness, instructed from infancy in the duty of thanking God for sunshine and trusting Him in storms, he finds it comparatively easy to obey the Saviour's injunction. But those less fortunate persons whose telescopic eyes are peering into the future, bringing its difficulties near and magnifying them enormously—imagination lively, brain fevered, nerves sensitive, fears potent, aspirations ardent, ambitions towering, restlessness incurable—how shall they tutor themselves to obey this command? They need to be working at the business incessantly, and even then the victory is not likely to be conspicuous. Blessed are they who, imbibing the spirit of the Master and accepting God as Father, receive the allotments of life without murmuring. They are aided in securing health, happiness and success; yes, even heaven is easier won.

II. The remedy and the sources whence it is obtained.

It is reasonable to suppose that a remedy exists, for there are remedies for most of the ills that afflict us—remedies for scarlet-fever, for small-pox, for diphtheria, for head-ache, for tooth-ache, for weak eyes, for palpitating hearts. Why not then for heart-aches? There are; and the following is worthy of a trial:

A heartful of faith, saturated in the spirit of resignation, filtered into the goblet of self-control, sweetened with the extract of small expectations, flavored with the essence of hope, steeped in the chalice of humility, kept simmering over the fires of devotion to God—to be taken in liberal doses daily, prescription renewed weekly at the Sabbath service.

Faith will strengthen the soul in trusting God's mercy, producing the conviction that He is interested in us, cares for us, is willing to lift the spirit upwards toward Himself, enabling us to regard the realization of our cherished hopes as less valuable than the benefits which discipline confers. Resignation will soothe the twitchings of the discontented heart, prompting the exclamation, "It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good": "Undertake thou for me; hold thou me up and I shall be safe"—safe for time and safe for eternity:

"His will, not mine be done." Resigned, the patient shall be able to see that he is short-sighted, his Father all-wise; he feeble, his protector omnipotent. Self-control will tend to open his eyes to the fact that worry lessens the chances of success, energy being consumed and the power of endurance being diminished; that an efficient way of augmenting future worry is the indulgence of apprehensions in the present instead of doing what judgment dictates and calmly awaiting the issue. Small expectations are an essential ingredient in the remedy, for most of us expect too much. Better expect little and disappointment is not liable to be ours. If more comes than we anticipate, we shall have ground for joyousness. When Elijah was expecting nothing and was ready to bequeath the same, less or more, to his successor—sheep-skin coat included—the food furnished him by ravens and as well the cakes subsequently baked on coals refreshed his spirit. If he had been expecting great things he might have contemned what saved his life. Expecting little, he was not disappointed, and found the little enough. Instead of murmuring, he took courage and endeavored to weave a hopeful future out of a disheartening present. Hope, as an ingredient in the remedy, makes the pulse beat more vigorously, imparts luster to the eye, clearness to the intellect, strength

to the limb, skill to the hand, energy to the will and buoyancy to the spirits. Humility enables us to see how much more we receive than we merit, how liberal God is and how many sacrifices friends make for us. It prompts the patient to observe that we have more cause for gratitude than for complaint. To a sense of unworthiness add devotion to God and over-anxiety shall have some difficulty in thrusting its arrows into the soul. The ship whose anchor is fixed in the rocks is held securely though storms rage, winds howl, waves foam and whirlpools hiss. The heart that is anchored in God is able to outride the storms of life. The remedy is most beneficial when it is taken fresh from the sanctuary each Lord's day.

We betake ourselves to a more congenial phase of the subject, the source of the remedy, "religion, pure and undefiled." Though human persistency has accomplished much, it has never discovered any remedy for worry. In its exhaustive search of the mineral kingdom it has discovered invaluable remedies; nothing, however, that will cure corroding anxiety. It has investigated, stewed and boiled nearly every vegetable found in the lands inhabited by man, but it has discovered no medicine that cures worriment. It has practiced vivisection on most of the domestic animals, and on some that

roam in the wilderness, but it has found no means of curing over-anxiety. It has ransacked every speculation launched upon the sea of human life, but it has found no recipe for heart-ache. Religion has furnished the only remedy, and hers sometimes fails, because taken too seldom or in homeopathic doses or mixed in concentrated worldliness. Taken often and in unadulterated form it is an infallible remedy. Many are able to furnish testimonials of complete cure; and others testify to having received no small measure of relief.

III. The application of the remedy and the cautions which should follow.

The remedy should be taken, not laid away to be looked at on Sabbaths; taken, not as a nauseous dose which it is an evidence of bravery to swallow without wincing, but good-naturedly and in the expectation that it will be helpful. With every symptom of a return of the disease a second dose should be taken, the eyes being turned away, meanwhile, from earthly trifles, and the tongue silenced lest by pouring grievances into open ears it may exercise anxiety into a new and more vigorous life.

After taking the remedy it is hazardous to allow selfishness to be conjecturing what ought to happen in the future. It is also injudicious to be spending time in traveling backwards over

the roads on which we stumbled, counting the stones marked by our bleeding feet, viewing the spots where we were worsted, noting the sloughs of despond into which we fell, setting up memorials where we shed tears and examining the precipices over which we fell into dejection. Better look thankfully on the past, hopefully towards the future, cheerfully towards men and trustfully towards God—not too confidently on what we hope may be ours, not too indignantly on what we fear may come our way. We should also be careful not to be casting fuel on the flames of envy; it may render anxiety red-hot.

May each learn in experience how much of comfort comes in heeding the Saviour's injunction. May it be our fortune to allow no more trouble to come into to-day than belongs therein.

The future is before us. From behind its curtain may happiness come to each. May anxieties come with laggard footsteps and depart on nimble feet. May each find religion a comfort in the walks of life and a support when life's journey nears its end. May we each learn that Christ's religion is more than pardon of sin, that it is a rock on which we may rest when the billows are rolling, that it is a refuge to which we may flee when the storm is

raging, that it is the pathway of the Great King, fragrant with the sweetness of new-blown roses and strewn with crowns of glory—sunshine, joy, hope, inspiration.

V

GOD'S INTEREST IN US

The full import of the word by which we designate the First Cause—the Ultimate of all ultimates—is to us incomprehensible—necessarily so. Believing Him omnipresent, omniscient, omnipotent, unconditioned, eternal, we do not claim to be able to grasp the full meaning of the terms. Consequently, when we consider the extent of His sway—over individuals, communities, nations, worlds, and systems of worlds; and as well when we contemplate His eternal self-existence, we are forced to concede that a being whose intellectual powers are limited cannot understand “The Unconditioned” unto perfection.

Indeed, as long as we are constrained to acknowledge ourselves incapable of appreciating the duration of periods connected with human events—the time that has elapsed since the foundations of Babylon were laid, since the earliest of the pyramids were constructed, since Troy was in its infancy; and until we are able to comprehend the varied and complicated interests of an empire such as anciently existed on the banks of the Nile, and are competent to the formation of a reasonably accurate concep-

tion of the events which have occurred since man became a tenant of the earth, why should we imagine that we might come to a full realization of the greatness of Him whose government, during the cycles of unending duration, extends without conditions alike over the little and the great?

It is difficult, confessedly so, to believe that He who rules a universe should condescend to concern Himself in the trifles that make up our lives. So immeasurable is the contrast between His greatness and our insignificance that in contemplating the former we are tempted to conclude that He does not deign to note our trials; and when we consider the latter, we find ourselves nearly incapable of appreciating His greatness. Why, we ask, should He interest Himself in the struggles, the despondencies, the disappointments, the fears, the hopes and the sorrows of a being whose life is but one cast of a swiftly moving shuttle?

What, we inquire, could induce inconceivable greatness to manifest concern for an existence which is but one atom "in the dust of the balance"; and whose tears are but drops from the surging stream of sorrow?

Will He dry the mourner's tear? Will He vindicate the honor of helpless innocency? Will He impart strength to those who, with

trembling steps, are trying to tread the paths of uprightness? Ah! and will He pause to impart courage to those who have fallen by the wayside?

Subdued into adoring wonder as we behold suns of transcendent brilliancy whirled by a hand all powerful along measureless pathways, presumably accompanied by worlds tenanted with sentient beings, we are disposed to ask, Is it less difficult to imagine that He who guides Arcturus will note man's trials than it is to conclude that the ocean makes record of each ripple that dies on its shore? Does the earth stay in its course to number the seeds that perish or count the blades of grass that wither on its bosom? Does the sun send forth special rays to kiss the grave of the insect whose life continued but an hour?

However difficult it may be to conceive that God has interest in man, living faith—"the evidence of things not seen"—enables us to believe that our Father cares for us, guides us, strengthens us, comforts us. "Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief."

Nor is it impossible to present evidence that our faith rests on an enduring foundation.

Why may not God's greatness be regarded as a basis on which to rest our hope of securing His interest, His care, His love? As a means of strengthening this conviction it may

be well to note in brief what has been done in our behalf.

Our Father;—who by cosmic forces evolved a dwelling place for us out of previously created matter; who caused the earth to bring forth vegetable products, by which was prepared a soil suited to man's cultivation; who deposited in earth's strata almost inexhaustible treasures for man's enrichment—coal, silver, gold, diamonds; who clothed matter with forces which the human intellect might learn to harness for service and even for pleasure; who endowed man with reason, conscience, affections and a superintending will, crowning this last precious gift with freedom; who made, through holy men of old, a revelation of His purposes of mercy and by so doing kept alive the dimmed embers of devotion century after century; who in His word appealed to the consciences of men, greatly honoring human nature by exhibiting marvelous interest in man's welfare both in this life and in that beyond the veil; who sacrificed His Son in order to win back alienated affection: who gave His Spirit to bear testimony to the soul of man of divine love and so secure a return of affection; who established in human society the home, the church and the state, three fruitful sources of happiness—He, our Father, in so highly respecting, exalting and enriching us, has enabled

us to believe that it is in harmony with His nature to manifest care over us, interest in us and love for us.

Following these and similar lines of reasoning we are warranted, I apprehend, in regarding the bewildering greatness of our Father as a guarantee of divine care rather than as a barrier thereto or a hindrance to belief therein. Indeed, since The Word furnishes promises which were designed to sustain the hearts of the despondent ones and to dry the tears of the sorrowing, we may regard His greatness as directly concerned in the fulfillment of these covenants of kindness. For, quite manifestly the mere presence on the sacred page of admonitions to accept guidance and comfort in our trials, reverses, fears and sorrows can in no way be regarded as an expression of empty sympathy, but must be considered an assurance, guaranteed by Almightyness, that if conditions are complied with the gifts specified will be conferred. Instead of being, as some seem to imagine, a barrier to the bestowment of favors, it is in fact a guarantee. In like manner the stability of the laws of nature, rendering it certain that food, air, sunshine and bodily exercise have potency in extending life, is evidence that Majestic greatness—under ascertainable conditions—is a species of guaran-

tee to continued life and a certain measure of comfort.

In endowing us with a powerful and nearly ineradicable inclination to become, and to continue, interested in our children—in their physical, moral, social, intellectual and spiritual welfare—our Father has rendered it comparatively easy for us to believe that He, in the fullness of his personality and in the entire orbit of His incommunicable attributes, is concerned in the welfare of those whom the Christ has encouraged us to regard as children of Him whom we may address as Father.

As deism has been relegated to the receptacle of worn-out theories we no longer believe that an omnipotent personality, having created the world, retired within the veiled chambers of eternity, leaving the complicated machinery of a measureless universe to run its fated courses and tell of its destined changes. Consequently, there are comparatively few who are disposed to permit a conviction of divine greatness to annihilate belief in providential care.

They see no incompatibility between limitless greatness and tender interest in the sentient beings called into existence by almighty power. They prefer to regard each as evidencing the existence of the other.

Consequently, instead of imagining that the

greatness of the Creator renders it probable that a hand divine leaves untouched all, or nearly all, the affairs of man as too insignificant for notice, we are warranted, I conjecture, in saying that greatness ensures interest in what greatness produces, however insignificant the thing or person produced may be. Assuredly, nothing that a personal being, perfect in all respects, chooses to call into existence either is or can be too little for his subsequent care.

It is nearly impossible to conceive of greatness which is indifferent to the many littles which make greatness. Accordingly it will be found somewhat difficult to discover any human being who, indifferent to details, succeeded in acquiring what the world denominates greatness. On the other hand it is easy to find in history examples of men whose greatness consisted to a large extent, and was in part consequent on, careful attention to trivial details incident to the accomplishment of large results. And these are they whose names are found in Fame's great temple.

The reputation of Thothmes III rests, not solely, nor even mainly, on his conquests, nor upon the monuments he erected on the banks of the Nile, but far more upon the pains he displayed in learning the details of military

operations and in supplying the needs of those whom he ruled.

The greatness of Augustus consisted chiefly in the fact that he studied most assiduously the needs of the common people and by enacting wise laws guarded the rights of humble citizens, thereby augmenting the sum of human happiness.

The greatness of Queen Elizabeth was secured not so much by a series of great acts as by attention to many seemingly almost insignificant matters, which were connected, however, with the peace, prosperity, renown and greatness of a nation during the most illustrious period of its history. The eminence to which Abraham Lincoln attained was due, quite certainly in part to the fact that he sympathized with the bereaved, shed tears with weeping mothers, freed the slaves by the throb of his great heart, bore on his face the evidence of profound interest in the unity of the nation, and gave to the world the tribute of a loving heart in honor of the nation's heroes.

Attention to things apparently insignificant often produces momentous results. Consequently, he who wisely manages details secures more substantial results than they who, building castles in the air wait for greatness to be thrust upon them by the mailed hand of inex-

orable fate. In all ages, and pre-eminently since the advent of Christ, foremost thinkers have regarded sympathy with the troubled, interest in the unfortunate, charity towards the poor and self-sacrifice in behalf of worthy though unpopular causes as in a commendable degree characteristic of true greatness.

May we not, therefore, regard it as an evidence of greatness that our Sovereign cares for our wants, hears the cry of the raven, clothes the lilies of the valley, notes the falling of a sparrow and extracts pangs from the hearts of the anguishful?

As nothing can happen to us except by divine permission, and as we believe in the tender mercy of Him whose "gentleness makes us great," why consider the testings of our faith by bereavements as neither permitted by our Father nor in any way connected with our enduring happiness? And if the spirit of motherliness is helpful in enabling us to bear trials without murmuring, why regard it as too insignificant to merit display by Him who "numbers the hairs of the head."

Emotions of gratitude thrill every nerve of our being when in the depths of a throbbing heart we have succeeded in fully realizing the fact that He before whom "all the nations of the earth are as nothing" stoops to lift up the fallen, proffers spiritual sight to blinded eyes,

extends a helping hand to the feeble, gives songs in nights of sorrow; and enfolding His sheep in His love, as a shepherd places the bleating lamb in his bosom, conveys them to a mansion in the city which sin, suffering, sorrow and death are not permitted to enter.

When we come to appreciate the fact that He who guides millions of suns in the fields of immensity is He who, permitting griefs to embitter our lives, wipes away our tears and proffers guidance to a home celestial, we adoringly exclaim, "Unto Him be glory for his mercy." There is no fluttering pulse, no feeble step, no weakened courage, no languishing heart which His omnipotent power cannot strengthen.

Remembering that our Father is omniscient, we ought not to discover difficulty in believing that He who is "acquainted with all our ways" can give needed counsel, fitted to make us "wise unto Salvation"—unto deliverance from worry and fear, temptation and grief, disheartenment and unbelief.

Strengthened by unconquerable faith in the omnipresence of God, we ought to be prompted to believe that even though we were occupants of a worn-out world on the confines of non-entity we should still be recipients of His bounty, partakers of the comforts He bestows, objects of his care, and participants in His mercy. Yea, might be prompted to feel that

we were hourly subject to His laws, ennobled by conceptions of His greatness, humbled by a sense of sin and pavilioned by His love.

Conceding that immutability is an inference from Almighty power and unerring wisdom, we may readily believe that the divine purposes span not only the years of our brief lives, nor simply the period of a nation's existence, nay, not even the millenniums through which suns retain light and power, but extend from everlasting to everlasting; and that by consequence there is in reality nothing little—what we call littles being only necessary parts of one great whole.

Why should we find it an arduous task to conclude that whatever one's occupation in life may be—that of merchant harassed with cares, of physician under the strain of anxiety, of laborer burdened with trouble and bewildered by conflicting impulses, of moral and religious teacher weighted with responsibilities, of a father distracted by the conduct of children—he may believe that God's hand holds him, His bounty will feed him, His mercy enswathes him and divine love encircles him?

VI

RESTLESSNESS—RESTFULNESS

As the heart of man was in creation fitted for a home with its Maker, it is, until it finds repose in Him, "like the troubled sea, which can not rest, whose waters cast up mire and filth." The disappointed assert, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity." The harassed exclaim, "Oh, that I had wings like a dove, for then would I fly away and be at rest." The trustful exclaim, "There is laid up for me a crown of righteousness." The hopeful affirm, "There remaineth a rest." Restlessness in this world—restfulness in the world to come. Warfare in this life—peace in a life beyond.

The theme is one that is of interest to all, for, each—many aspirations having ended in disappointment—is tempted to declare, "Emptiness in the present, fullness in the sweet by and by." Even such as have attained the prizes they struggled for are disposed to covet escape from buffetings which stifle the growth of new-born hopes. They exclaim, "Now, incessant toil; in the hereafter, rest." For quietude, not a few are almost ready to betake themselves anywhere, even into a wilderness. On the walls of the nursery we find the motto, "Rest in

heaven." On the margin of the ledger we read: "In heaven no worry over unpaid accounts." The wearied wife, with eyes suffused in tears, is conning the words, "The Lord is my refuge and strength, a very present help in time of trouble." The laborer, as he wends his way homeward, represses a sigh by contemplating the repose that awaits the ransomed of the Lord.

There is one class, it must be conceded, to whom thoughts such as these come with less force than to others, the young. They are less fitted to appreciate what is said in reference to the restlessness of human life because they are entering the currents that flow into the heaving ocean, and are enjoying the excitement. They do not expect their ambitions to miscarry. They are soaring on wings of hope and have no fear that their pinions will be plucked by the hand of adversity. They are the witnesses of unrest everywhere, but they do not sigh for deliverance therefrom. They find pleasure in endeavors to mount above it. Consequently, whatever is said in reference to the unsatisfactory character of earth's struggles and the emptiness of its rewards is liable to fail in securing attention. Who is disposed to wish that it might be otherwise? Who would snatch sweetness from hearts that will know bitterness soon enough? Endowed with

energy, fitted for toil, ready to meet difficulties, possessing faith in human nature and prepared to rely upon their own efforts, they count on reaching the goal of their aspirations. Hence, far from desiring to fly away and be at rest they are anxious to leap into the vortex of the whirlpool. They hope to issue thence loaded with the fruits of manly exertion. Is any one disposed to rob them of hopes which may enable them to win triumphs, to gather experiences, to ennoble existence, to recognize the fact that earth's highest happiness consists in fulfilling obligations to God and to man? If David, when a shepherd-lad, had felt as he did when he had acquired wealth, fame, power, and a royal palace, he might have accomplished little either for himself or for the Jewish nation. The hardships of life are often stepping-stones to success.

The history of the past furnishes evidence that the conditions of life do not greatly alter as the centuries go by. David's exclamation, wrung from a wearied heart, still suits the children of men. Since the words were spoken many changes have occurred. The Jews have been scattered throughout the earth. The Roman Empire has crumbled to pieces. Germany has emerged from savagery. The hordes of Northern Asia, pouring through the fastnesses of the Alps, have crushed nationalities

on the shores of the Mediterranean. Moham-
medanism, born in fanaticism and fanned into
power by lust of rule, has had its conquests,
its glory, its defeats and much of its decrepi-
tude—fit for burial and no one prepared to
furnish it a grave. The Christian Religion,
born in Bethlehem and heralded by humble
fishermen, has won conquests alike in the hovel
of the poor and in the palace of the rich till
under her influence Paganism has been crip-
pled and civilized nations are vying with each
other in proclaiming the value of Christianity;
has broken the fetters of superstition engrafted
upon it from heathenism and is again distilling
blessings, elevating society to a nobler plane.
When these words were written not only North
and South America, but old England in meas-
ure, were unknown to the east, their inhabitants
barbarians. Innumerable, however, as have
been the changes which have passed over so-
ciety, the heart of man has not changed. The
desire for rest still remains. Man's aspirations
have not radically altered. His disappoint-
ments are neither fewer nor less bitter. Weari-
ness still weighs on his spirits. Indeed, if in
the matter of worry there has been any change,
it has seemingly been from great worry to
greater. In this age, as in David's, men may
be tempted to covet wings, by which to escape
from the succession of toils, harassments and

vanities. Some might be disposed to betake themselves to the wilderness if convinced that the change would bring satisfaction. The wigwam as a home and skins for clothing would be welcome, perhaps, if they could furnish rest.

I do not need to remind you that it is a restless age in which we are living. The machinery of modern society is driven by steam and electricity. Our jaded limbs and throbbing hearts are scarcely able to keep up with the wheels of Anglo-Saxon activity. The effort to satisfy the fictitious wants of an over-wrought civilization is grinding away the lives of many, who seem incapable of lifting their spirits into calmness. Modern society proffers little repose this side the grave; and yet it is rest that all are seeking, that all are fighting for, that all are destroying in the effort to acquire. They are hoping, however, to secure it by and by. Are they seeking it where it may be found? Are we prepared to concede that it is not furnished by the things of sense? Christ says, "I will give you rest." When we have taught ourselves that "contentment with godliness is great gain," the love of the world, which lashes its victims without mercy, will have lost its power. It will be incapable of driving us "from ills we have to others that we know not of." Convinced that it can not bring us

rest, we may be disposed to seek repose on the bosom of God. Alas, we are tempted to fancy that at some time and in some place the world can furnish us what we covet! Cares have pressed upon us, disappointments have overtaken us, anxieties have rent our hearts, bereavements have lacerated our affections, departed joys have left us in despondency and unrealized hopes have paralyzed energy; nevertheless we persist in conjecturing that there must be some time, some place, some circumstances, in which the soul may find satisfaction in the things of sense. Instead of seeking it in Christ, we imagine we may yet discover it hidden somewhere amid the world's treasures. We are set on entertaining the fancy that days are coming in which trials will be fewer and less perplexing, cares less numerous and less onerous, disappointments less frequent and less stinging. Such may be the case, though the hope may prove delusive. Are we likely to have all we covet? If so, are we hastening its consummation in the future by worrying in the present? When able to feel that as God made the soul for Himself it can find rest only in Him; that as all that comes to us is sent by Him we should teach ourselves to say, "Thy will, not mine," we shall not need to sigh for the wings of a dove that we may fly away and be at rest. We shall be resting in God. Freed

from bondage to the things of sense, we shall be introduced "into the glorious liberty of the children of God."

The wheels of this restlessness are driven by our own insatiate desires. We covet riches, grasping after them in the expectation that they will render us contented. We have no difficulty in seeing that they do not bring repose to others, but more cares, more worries, more disappointment, more anxieties and more opportunities of being wronged. Nevertheless, unmindful of the fact that happiness rears its envied palace in the heart and not upon pecuniary possessions, that contentment loves to dwell along the humble avenues of life, that there are fewer tempests in the valley than on the mountain-top, that more joys circle around cottages than around palaces—unmindful of such facts as these, we conjecture that happiness would be ours if the full horn of plenty was poured upon us. Others are grasping after influence or fame. The testimony of the favored few to the effect that these are short-lived and unsatisfactory fails in destroying the delusion. Though David from a throne exclaims, "Oh, for wings," they fancy that in their hands the prizes would prove sources of happiness. Though profane history has furnished long lists of those who in acquiring station have parted with happiness, still there are not a few who insist that

if they could only reach those dizzy heights they would be content. To attain their object they sacrifice ease, health, principle, conscience—everything worth possessing—in order that they may clutch a bubble. If acquired, will it bring rest? It may arouse envy, produce heart-burnings, increase perplexities and impose responsibilities. Two Roman emperors, one in the east and one in the west, resigned their thrones on the same day by mutual agreement, and retired to private life. One, being discontented, wrote to the other, recommending a resumption of regal authority. In response he received this, "Come see the cabbages I have raised at Silonica with my own hands, and you will cease to covet the empty honors and the rasping cares that embitter the life of an emperor." Many aspirants to fame discover, on reaching the summit of ambition, that they have only become a target for the arrows of malignity. Oh, that some orator could persuade the American people that piety displayed in the humble walks of life is an efficient instrumentality in securing contentment! He who "seeks first the kingdom of heaven" will find those things added which conduce to happiness. The aids to its possession—health, occupation, home-comforts, practical religion and the hope of heaven—are nearer the humble dwelling than they are to the throne; and its

foes—idleness, jealousy, envy, ambition, self-indulgence—are more remote. The sleepless pillow is not so likely to be on the bed which receives the frame wearied with toil as it is to be upon the couch on which he tosses whose nerves have been subjected to tension under anxieties. It was not David caring for his father's flocks on Bethlehem's plain, but David on a throne who coveted solitude till life's calamities were past. When humble, poor and inconspicuous, he was cheerful, and quite as religious as in subsequent years.

If unhallowed aspirations fire the soul there is apt to come a time when their fruits taste bitter. At such a time, those who are feeding upon them are liable to fancy that by the aid of wings they might escape beyond the reach of the tyrant desires which lash the jaded spirit. Will they ever be able to pitch their tents in Utopia? Has God promised rest in this world? Was this designed as our home? When we begin to regard it as our portion is not our Father doing us a kindness in sending us reminders that we are travelers to a better country? The longings of the soul are not satisfied by what the world can proffer. Hence, Christ's invitation, "Come unto me—I will give you rest." Trusting God, the believer may attain rest here and anticipate still more in the hereafter—in that world where vanities are past,

disappointments forgotten and trials are only remembered as they have left results in character. There, no worry, no hurry; no fears, no tears; no sorrow, no to-morrow—an eternal, cloudless day.

We shall never find rest till we enter the mansions prepared for us by our Father. Do the leaves that burst forth in spring-time ever find rest till they sink back upon the bosom of mother earth? Do the drops of the shower cease moving ere they reach the ocean? Will not the air be whirling ceaselessly till the earth is buried in the sun? Will the heart of the insect stop throbbing ere its body drops lifeless upon the ground? Will not difficulties confront each nation till it topples into oblivion? Why marvel then that restlessness is the portion of every wanderer on earth till his feet cross the threshold of home? No quietude till we enter "the rest that remaineth to the people of God," beyond the sighing and the hoping, beyond the struggling and the dying. Nevertheless, thanks to God, He gives us foretastes of the blessedness that awaits us.

This restlessness of the human heart is confirmed by observation and syllabled with distinctness by every tenant of a perishable tabernacle. Under the vision of all, the stream of life is hastening onward. One by one, drops of humanity are swept into the current and

carried out of sight. In the maelstrom off the coast of Norway floating weeds and driftwood are borne round in concentric circles till all disappear in the whirlpool. A fitting figure by which to illustrate the disappearance of the successive generations of men—the tossings, the helplessness, the sadness, the sudden disappearance of human beings.

The emptiness of life during its brief and uncertain continuance is a theme on which poets frequently dwell; but, while asserting with emphasis that the world can furnish no satisfactory pleasure, they fail in furnishing the needed comfort. In directing man's footsteps from vanity, they do well, but they do not direct them towards the enduring. They exclaim, Restlessness here, but they do not tell us how and where restfulness may be found. They do not condescend to remind us that as this life is empty while it continues and its continuance brief, we ought to be concerned in reference to the future. They might remind us at least that the person who knows he must leave his present residence acts wisely in making preparation to enter another. The reminder is needed, for they are not few who, though they are aware that they must ere long remove from the "earthly house of this tabernacle" put forth little effort to secure "a house not made with hands."

VII

THE EARTH FULL OF MERCY

What we see in the days which drop like jewels at our feet depends in measure on the circumstances which environ us and the spirit which rules our lives. The person who has undergone, or is undergoing, an unusual amount of suffering manages to see trials everywhere—pains racking human bodies, anguish thrilling on wearied nerves, tears trickling down wan cheeks, calamities brooding over broken hearts, worries beginning with the first breath and ending only with the last, tears from the cradle to the grave; is disposed to paint pictures of countries devastated, of cities overthrown, of lives sacrificed to satisfy ambition, of widows in sackcloth, sharing desolate homes with children who are crying for bread; is inclined to expect, in kings' courts discord, jealousy, intrigue, dissimulation; in palaces misery rendered hateful by the grandeur of its surroundings; in the homes of the middle class thirst for wealth, more intense because robbed of the hope of ever being slaked; yea, and in homes of wretchedness unrequited toil, harassing cares, sickening brutality and incurable melancholy.

The person at whose heart grief is gnawing

will be likely to see grief everywhere. In his opinion the twin sisters, Sorrow and Tears, sit beside the fountain of life, daily companions. Blue glasses make the brightest color look blue.

The person who has felt, or is feeling, the flings of fortune is liable to consider disappointment the inheritance of mortals—everywhere frustrated hopes, unrealized ambitions, fruitless toils, unbearable weariness, burdens of old age and forgetfulness as soon as the grave is closed.

As such is the disposition of human nature, we are able to affirm that only eyes disposed to observe the goodness of God, and only hearts attuned to gratitude, are likely to exclaim, "The earth, O Lord, is full of thy mercy." It is true, we are tempted to exclaim, The earth is full of crime, of duplicity, of selfishness, of heartlessness, of unreliability, of ingratitude, of spitefulness, of hatred, of envy. But though the devout servant of God sees these—he can not do otherwise—he also sees the mercy of God above, around, beneath, everywhere. Indeed, by this, the condition of his heart is revealed. Loyal, devoted, grateful, he is able to withdraw his eyes from earth's calamities, and even from earth's sins, and to fix them joyously on the mercy of God. Sin he sees, but as an enemy to be vanquished. Anguish he sees, and may have felt in his own heart, but in suffering

comforted and rendered helpful in the formation of character he witnesses manifestations of divine mercy. He observes wave after wave of temptation dashing against the better purposes of man, and breaking them down, but in pardon granted, in strength imparted, in hopes inspired, he witnesses pleasing exhibitions of the boundless compassion of God. Disappointments he has experienced, but in the lessons learned therefrom he has pleasing evidence of the loving-kindness of God. Man's ingratitude, his disregard of friendships and his forgetfulness of the dead have not escaped his observation, but in being permitted to believe that self-sacrifice is never unrequited, that friendship bestowed blesses him at least who bestows it, that duty done without regard to the reward is the noblest kind of goodness—though he who exhibits a rare measure of self-sacrifice may be forgotten ere grass grows on the new-made grave, in being permitted to believe that the rewards of Christian character are imperishable, he has occasion to magnify the mercy of his Maker.

Mercy, as the term is usually employed, means favor shown the undeserving. Understanding the word in this sense we have no difficulty in accepting the statements of Scripture; for two things are evident, namely, man can merit little from God; he receives blessings innumerable.

Hence few things are more conspicuous than the displays of our Maker's merciful kindness. We are momentarily the recipients of unmerited favors. The monuments of His mercy are as numerous as the creatures that feed on His bounty. Consequently, with hearts properly attuned, we ought to find no difficulty in discovering manifestations of divine goodness. Alas! such is our alienation from the Creator that we are in a state of dissonance with our environment. When in harmony with Him we can not fail to find evidences of His mercy pouring into our hearts from everything around us. The very atmosphere is fragrant with love. The table may not be loaded with delicacies, but as God furnished what it has, it testifies to interest in us—an interest greater than we merit. The clothing may not be purple and fine linen, but is more abundant and of better quality than has been furnished to many whose characters merit more than ours. The home may not be a palace, but it is not a cave, nor a hut, nor an iceberg. The favors we covet may not come every morning and every evening, like the ravens which fed Elijah; nevertheless they come oftener to us than to many another. Success, such as we desire, may not be ours, but if we teach ourselves to sympathize with those who have been less successful, gratitude may be ours. If we have been called upon to endure chasten-

ing, let us remember that it is a mercy we are not consumed.

Fitted to appreciate God's loving-kindness, we shall discover no place in which it is not visible. The earth, upheld by a hand divine, is still in care of Him who "maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." The history of redemption, from its announcement in Eden to the declaration made on Calvary, "It is finished," presents evidence of favor shown, not alone to those who were obedient to divine laws but as well to "a disobedient and gain-saying people." In the calling of Abraham and in the revelation of a purpose of conferring blessings upon "all the nations of the earth," in the fuller unfolding of that purpose to Isaac and to Jacob, in the descent of the seventy into Egypt and in the education the chosen people there received, in their deliverance from bondage after they had grown to be a people capable of being organized into a nation which should be the custodian of faith in the only living and true God, in the announcement of the law from Mount Sinai, in the passage over Jordan, in the conquest of Canaan, in the influence accorded to the priesthood, in the messages of the prophets, in the greatness attained by the chosen people under the reign of David, in every bleeding lamb laid on the altar, a type of Him who was

offered as a sacrifice for sin, yea, in a series of acts stretching through centuries God was making displays of His mercy, to a people who merited condemnation and punishment. In tracing the history of cities and empires which have perished—Babylon, Nineveh, Tyre, Jerusalem, the Persian empire, the Medo-Persian, the Macedonian, the Roman—we have no difficulty in observing evidences of divine mercy in the fact that they were permitted, after becoming corrupt, to topple into oblivion, their mission having been accomplished. Nor should we doubt that He has displayed His goodness to the children of men in furnishing motives to obedience of His laws, in assuring us that wickedness shall not be permitted to mar the happiness of the just, and in strengthening the desire of being found in the number of those who shout, “Not unto us, not unto us, but unto thy name be glory for thy mercy and for thy truth’s sake.” Hopes, founded on the mercy of God, are capable of sustaining the soul, not only in the house where His honor dwelleth, but as well in the home of the Laplander, in the cave of the Hottentot, in the wigwam of the Indian, in the garret of the poor man and in the mansion of the prince. Everywhere pardon is attainable. Everywhere the hope of immortality may inspire the soul. Even in abodes of cruelty and in haunts of vice, divine tenderness

is displayed in extending life and crowning it with unmerited blessings. Beside the bed of sick, Mercy sits, recounting from the past the incidents which illustrate the goodness of God, counseling resignation and inspiring hope. At the gateway of death she is heard whispering, "Take courage; God's compassion is great."

Humbled by a sense of our own unworthiness, imbued with the spirit of thankfulness and experienced in discerning evidences of divine goodness, we may have been able to observe, after close and continued inspection, that some of the clouds which overshadowed our lives were silver-edged. Others have seemed to open over our heads, giving us a view of the measureless depths above. Some have gathered round us so closely, and have continued so long, that we have come to regard them as avenues made by our Father through which we may journey with safety to a cloudless land. As on this ascending pathway, we pause to shed tears over new griefs we hear mercy whispering, "The end is not yet"; "Sorrow may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning."

God's mercy finds its motives in His love. It could find no motive outside of Himself. Only disinterested benevolence can prompt the injured to show favors to the unrepentant injurer who neither has nor can acquire the power

of inflicting remediless injury. Can any other motive prompt omnipotence to heap kindnesses on those who are multiplying acts of disobedience and who could not place Almightyness under obligations even if they strove to do so? What motive save benevolence could prompt to the display of mercy? Would it lessen absolute dominion if the sun and all its circling worlds lapsed into oblivion? Would it obscure the immaculate holiness of God if human beings enthroned iniquity? Though God's mercy finds its motive in Himself we are not to assume that merciful kindness is displayed in equal measure towards all. Of the twelve Apostles, three were more favored than the remaining nine. The mercy of God is gratuitous, as free as the air which is free to all—to Hottentot and to the King on his throne; as free as work which is free to those who are resolved to find it, and take it when found. Like labor, the mercy of God will bring no gain to the man who makes no effort as a consequence of having it. It will never build up a character for him. Acres of untilled prairie or square miles of timber land will yield no profit to the man who refuses to cultivate the gift.

Mercy is not disposed to abandon her plea because Almightyness is on the throne, nor to lessen the urgency of her claim because a guilty culprit is at the bar. She is not disheartened

on seeing feeble love in her court, nor elated at the sight of boastful moral excellence. Her "balances are well adjusted." Neither in the presence of innate sinfulness, nor of willful obduracy is she deterred from asking for careful consideration of her proffered favors. She claims that there is no human being who does not need her interposition. She maintains she has the right to press her claims on every sentient creature till reason is dethroned or the heart ceases to beat.

As divine mercy is disinterested in its display, gratuitous in its character, helpful in its dominion and unchangeable in its manifestations, it promotes cheerfulness of heart, purity of motive, sweetness of spirit, consistency of life and fullness of gratitude.

VIII

CHEER VS. FOLLY

Whilst no inconsiderable portion of the human family have been flippantly saying, "Common sense is rare, folly abundant," Lord Bacon with the dignity of a philosopher has said, "There is in human nature generally more of the fool than of the wise." The testimony of the man who said, "Reading makes a full man, writing an exact man, conversation a ready man," is worthy of consideration.

Consequently, it is incumbent on us to consider whether we may unceremoniously dismiss such statements, or should regard them as founded in fact and inquire how we are to maintain good cheer.

We are seemingly compelled to concede that human beings by thousands have given exhibitions of follies, in dimensions vast, in character varied; the reasonable and the unreasonable; the curable and the incurable; the poorly veiled, their character ascertainable, and the cunningly devised, whose glittering robes common sense finds difficulty in removing; the excusable—small follies employed as an opiate to greater follies, and the inexcusable—such as well equipped knaves launch on the public to re-

lieve the plethoric purses of the over-credulous.

When we think of the frenzy of unhallowed ambition, the silliness of arrogance, the idiocy of dissimulation, the blindness of bigotry, the imbecility of perjury, the foolery of inebriety, the senselessness of sensuality, the futility of dishonesty, the impotence of hypocrisy, the dementia of tyranny and the fruitlessness of malice and envy, we marvel that there is folly enough in the world to keep these and their kindred vices so painfully prominent.

Human nature receives a severe shock when one reads Gibbon's account of the perjury of the barbarian, the Prince of the Avars, who after swearing—by the fires, by the forests, by the mountains, by the heavens, by the gods of the heavens and by the God who spoke in the Bible—that he had no intention hostile to Sirmium, rose from his knees and at once dispatched an envoy to the Roman Emperor, commissioned to say, "As Sirmium is invested on all sides and incapable of defending itself against my all-conquering forces, prudence dictates its immediate surrender."

Such folly ought to be impossible in every age. And yet, how shall we account for the fact that hearts which are shocked by such madness seem to beat regularly while citizens of a civilized nation are giving perjured testimony in courts

of justice, prompted thereto not by the hope of winning an empire, but lured by the desire of securing the acquittal of a political friend whose conduct merits penalty, or bought by money insufficient in quantity to purchase a dead donkey. Folly has its protean forms; one of these is inconsistency.

Moreover, of those who denounce this barbarian for deceiving his enemy till he was prepared to crush him, some, it may be, are not indisposed to allay the suspicions of a determined foe until they are ready to meet him in open combat. "Self is the man;" and sometimes conscience has trouble in maintaining its stand between him and what he desires to acquire.

From Sir John Lubboch's "Prehistoric Times" and Henry M. Stanley's "In Darkest Africa" we obtain dark pictures of the follies of savages. While striving to persuade ourselves that no such degrading practices characterize civilized nations, the morning paper is laid on our table containing accounts of thefts, defalcations, arson, cruelty, murders, suicides—crimes of almost every name. With a sigh we ask, for folly and crime has any savage tribe surpassed this nation the last twenty-four hours?

While striving to recall from memory the names of the veterans in folly—Nebuchadnezz-

zar, Athaliah, Jezebel, Joe Smith, the Simon who lived on a stone pillar, and his admirers who journeyed miles to honor his folly; the names of some few of the men who made a business of scourging themselves almost daily; the bishops who declared no man could enter heaven who wore whiskers while on earth, and of the bishops who affirmed every whiskerless man was liable to remain in purgatory limitless ages—our minds are perturbed by the question, How many comfortable homes for the poor might have been erected with the money now represented in the war-debts of Christian nations?

Almost every citizen in these nations would concur in regarding as a champion in folly and a monster in wickedness the ancient King of the Lombards, Alboin, who, while in a state of intoxication, ordered one of his officers to fill the skull of Cunimund, his wife's father, with wine and give it to the Queen, Rosamond, accompanied with the message, "Drink and rejoice with your father." All agree in pronouncing Alboin a monster. But in what language shall we characterize the conduct of powerful nations in pressing cups of human blood to the lips of tens of thousands whose chief demerit was citizenship in a weak nation.

So common is folly that we sometimes find it

displayed even by those who ordinarily manifest good judgment.

Ahithophel, David's counselor, was foolish enough to ruin a life-long reputation for common sense by setting his household in order and hanging himself. His greatness did not keep him from folly; it rendered his folly great. Strange! superior prudence and excessive foolishness in the same person. It evidences the widespread sway of senselessness and the fact that rashness and good judgment may dwell side by side. "He set his household in order"—prudence. "He hanged himself"—folly. And Absalom, rendered half-demented by seeming success, did not see Hushi's purpose.

Alexander the Great possessed masterful good sense along most lines. Nevertheless, he journeyed across the sands of Egypt to induce a priestess to declare him the son of a god; he demanded and joyously accepted worship as a divine person; he longed for wider dominion; he died a victim of intemperance.

Woolsey, when the disfavor of England's monarch clipped the wings of his ambition, was so overwhelmed by folly as to mourn inconsolably over the loss of smiles which could not ensure honor and the existence of frowns which could not destroy greatness.

I will not pause to illustrate the subject from specimens obtainable in the markets of

unreasonableness now transacting business. It is less hazardous to discharge columbiads over the graves of mosquitoes of the long ago or at follies now existent in China, Japan, Corea or Russia, than at living lions near our own homes.

Both in public and private life there are fooleries many, some of which we must bear with patience till the tricks by which men destroy their happiness die a natural death. To expect to annihilate them by inveighing against them is as unreasonable as the hope of gathering asphodels of the poetic species from seed sown on Sahara's sands; as unprofitable as the effort to transmute a tiger's rage into kindness; as unsuccessful as the transportation of diamonds from fairyland; as unremunerative as the business of weaving robes of beauty from moonbeams, as one-sided as the struggle to induce a hyena to prefer mercy to human flesh.

Perhaps we may venture to hope that some day Folly's friends may treat her as Alaric's soldiers treated his corpse—divert a river from its course, erect a magnificent tomb in the river-bed, deposit her corpse therein, restore the river to its channel, then, that the place of her burial may remain unknown, put to death all who took part in the obsequies.

Meanwhile, what shall they do to maintain cheerfulness who, interested in the progress of

humanity, continuously find difficulty in keeping up courage while the long-hoped-for consummation is delaying its arrival?

Let them retain faith in humanity's future. This will aid in repelling the approaches of despondency, and impart strength for successful service in the coming struggle between optimistic and pessimistic conceptions of man's earthly future. There is no valid reason why we should not entertain a well-grounded hope that the vessel freighted with earth's millions—even though it may drift at one time to the right and at another time to the left—will be making progress towards its predestined haven. Since the dawn of history the world has been drawing nearer the much coveted state—is still advancing; and with probable occasional lapses is almost certain to continue its progress. If, as we have a right to conclude, nearly all civilized nations have weariedly worked their way out of savagery; if, as seems to be the case, many less favored tribes following the footsteps of the Anglo-Saxon race, are emerging from intellectual, social, moral and spiritual darkness, why should we doubt that the world is on its way to a higher state? In fact progress is in the air. We are warranted in believing that the material and spiritual condition of savages in Africa is more hopeful to-day than it was when Livingstone sacrificed

his life in the hope of interesting the world in the uplift of the lowly; yea, is more encouraging than it was when Henry M. Stanley worked his way through the tangled forests where starvation lurked.

"Be of good cheer." There is now, as there always has been, a large number of persons who, possessed of living faith, are ready to devote their energies to hasten the dawn of a better day. Indeed, if Luther, Calvin and a few co-workers wrought such marvelous changes in forms of faith and modes of worship; if Wilberforce almost single-handed suppressed the slave traffic; if Howard ameliorated the conditions of the prisons of Europe—giving his life for the uplift of the friendless, why may we not believe that it only requires zealous workers to produce surprising results when God's time for effecting great changes has come?

"Hope on, hope ever." Do not underestimate the practical efficiency of a well-directed, properly rounded education—the cultivation of intellect, conscience, affections, will and the religious nature. Nor are evidences wanting which indicate advance along these and kindred lines. Enthusiasm is running higher. The spirit of self-sacrifice is greater. Auxiliary forces are more numerous and better drilled. The determination to win victory is more gen-

eral and by consequence more irresistible. The cohorts of the advancing columns feel the weight of responsibility more keenly than ever before—to appearances at least.

In the present age the exigencies of individual life are so pregnant with far-reaching consequences that a person unless blind to his own interests is led almost unconsciously to cultivate the gifts with which he was endowed at birth.

Be not disheartened. Folly does not possess unlimited control in the world. She sometimes finds difficulty in retaining her mastery over those with whom she does an almost daily business. Not a few of her patrons, who often use her well advertised nostrums, learn by experience that common sense has better goods at more reasonable prices.

Consequently, they usually manage to have a considerable amount of Wisdom's treasures on hand ready for profitable investment. They may be inconsistent—who is not?—but the sum total of their influence often redounds to the advantage of society—conduct disastrous to themselves proving instructive to the public. The good survives; the evil dies. Common sense is possessed of a charmed life—one which none of Folly's poisoned arrows can destroy. Her winged javelins are like mosquitoes, troublesome while engaged in business

but soon swept by health-freighted winds into the great unknown.

"*Esto vir.*" "With the well advised is wisdom." Though "wisdom is too high for a fool," it "is profitable to direct"—"is better than weapons of war." We may draw inspiration from the quickened spirit of interest in humanity, as evinced by a deeper, more potent sense of brotherhood which is testified to in moral reforms and in almost every species of philanthropic enterprise—in the phenomenal liberality of the wealthy towards the erection and maintenance of colleges, asylums, hospitals, homes for the unfortunate and for the promotion of "peace on earth and good will toward men."

The millions of dollars given in recent years by men who fully recognize their responsibility as stewards of heaven's bounties is a pleasing evidence of a coming dawn. In the fact that God's purposes parallel the ages, and that He works through those who consecrate themselves to his service, we have ground for the belief that man's future will be marked by a steady advance. Consequently, though there is much folly and consequent wickedness—yea, much which we can not hope to cure speedily—there is no occasion to become disheartened in work or pessimistic in spirit. God reigns. The human conscience still responds to cogent appeals.

Fuller development awaits the human intellect. The will of man, rendered stronger by gradual development, is likely to be better fitted to carry out honorable impulses.

The human heart will long more intensely for emancipation from follies and their prolific cause, sin. The star of hope, whose light first shone on Bethlehem's plain shall some day illumine the world. "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

VERSE

MOURNER

Go thou to Bethany, see there the mourner,
Who in her lonely and desolate home
Weeps o'er the loss of a friend and a brother,
Fearing lest Christ has forgotten his own.

Kindest and best of the friends of the weeper,
Hallowed is grief by the grief that was Thine,
Tears shed by Thee at the grave of the sleeper,
Sweet'ning my sorrows, give comfort divine.

Go to Gethsemane, where in the garden
Jesus, submissive, rich conquest has won;
Strength is imparted and weakness finds
pardon—
Now may the will of the Father be done.

Pattern of meekness, consoler in sorrow,
Teach me my life and my all to resign,
Trusting in Thee for each coming to-morrow—
Stronger Thy will and less erring than mine.

See thou on Calvary Jesus in anguish,
Off'ring himself as a ransom for sin,
Giving to hearts that in weakness now languish
Hopes of an endless communion with Him.

Moved by the spirit of self-abnegation,
Christ was in pain and in sorrow for me;
Calm let me look on my bitter prostration,
Saying, O Saviour, I'll bear it for Thee.

Go to the sepulcher where the lone sister
Burdened with grief is in search of God's
Son,
Read thou the lesson there taught to the weeper,
Life is not ended ere life's work is done.

Prince by the grave with the Magdalen weeping,
Aid me to find in my grief and my loss
Promise of joy, a result of Thy keeping:
Bright are the jewels that drop from a cross.

Lo! from the chambers of death Christ has
risen,
Victor and Lord over death and its sting,
Shattered the bars of the tomb's gloomy prison,
Death is the captive of Jesus the King.

Risen in triumph, exultant Redeemer,
Tutor my heart that is shrouded in gloom
That for the mourner, each sister and brother,
Jesus, companion, sheds hope on the tomb.

Go thou to Olivet, gateway to glory;
Bathe in the light from the home of the blest;
There at the end of this life's troubled story,
Weary and heart-sore, the mourner may rest.

Jesus ascended, my Lord and my Keeper,

Thanks to God's mercy, to all men is given
Life in the flesh of which death is the Reaper:

Thou giveth passports to calm rest in
Heaven.

EVER NEAR, O LORD, TO THEE

Tune, “Toplady.”

When a threat'ning storm draws near,
Or the sky is dark and drear,
If my path with snares is laid,
Though my feet from Thee have
strayed,

In the darkness may I be
Ever near, O Lord, to Thee.

As I stand within Thy court,
Pleading with Thee for support,
Joining with Thy people there
In their praise and in their prayer,
By my worship may I be
Ever near, O Lord, to Thee.

While I bow beside the bier,
There to drop a bitter tear
On the cold and pallid brow,
Warm with pulsing life till now,
In my sorrow may I be
Ever near, O Lord, to Thee.

If deep sadness chills my heart,
And refuses to depart,
As I bend beneath the grief,
Sighing deeply for relief,
In my sadness may I be
Ever near, O Lord, to Thee.

Since new strength I need each day
On my weary pilgrim way,
As my prayers to Thee ascend
For Thy guidance to the end,
In my pleading may I be
Ever near, O Lord, to Thee.

If I'm called to work for Thee
And my heart is chiding me
For my penury of love—
Love that comes from Thee above,
In my service may I be
Ever near, O Lord, to Thee.

As I walk in Beulah land,
Guided by Thy helpful hand,
Treading paths Thou deemest best,
To my everlasting rest,
In the journey may I be
Ever near, O Lord, to Thee.

When on Pisgah's heights I stand,
Gazing o'er the promised land,

Yearning for a mansion blest,
Where the laureled warriors rest,
In my longing may I be
Ever near, O Lord, to Thee.

When my work on earth is done
And the last great vict'ry won,
As I lift my eyes above,
Gazing on Eternal love,
Dying—living, may I be
Ever near, O Lord, to Thee.

THE BABY'S DEAD

With saddened heart and quiv'ring lips
You look upon the little slips,
Mementoes, lying on the bed
Where baby laid its fevered head.

With trembling pulse and accents wild
You grasp a plaything of your child
And lay it in some secret drawer
Where you may see it evermore.

With tearful eye upon the spot
Where baby kneeled beside its cot
To say, "I lay me down to sleep,"
You bow alone oftentimes to weep.

The rose you plant upon its tomb
You guard in hope to see it bloom;
And with your lips in accents mild
Adore the Keeper of your child.

Ere frosts of winter chill its bloom
You take the rosebush to the room
Whence baby by a Father's hand
Was taken to a better land.

When tunes you hummed in accents soft
Return to you again and oft,
You pause to wonder if the King
Has music which your babe can sing.

The path on which your baby trod
In going to its Father, God,
Is made by infant steps so plain
That you may find your babe again.

BE SILENT

Lord, sorrow from a new-made dart
Has left a deep and painful wound,
Till from a bleeding, aching heart
Wells up the prayer, Can help be found?

Extract, O Lord, the bitter sting,
And draw my heart to Thy dear side,
That I may learn to sweetly sing,
In God alone my hopes abide.

As at a grave Thou didst not chide
 The one who mourned a brother lost,
 But bade the weeper's faith abide,
 To me give cheer when tempest-tost.

The garden, Lord, saw Thee in grief
 Till Thou didst say, “Thy will be done”;
 Then I, when grieved, may find relief—
 The aid that came to God's own son.

As in a dark and thorny way,
 Thou didst in meekness bear Thy cross,
 Oh! give to me Thyself as stay,
 For else I sink beneath my loss.

Then when my heart has learned to see,
 What now it scarce can understand—
 That silence leaves a door for Thee—
 My joy shall be Thy guiding hand.

THE PLEADING SOUL

Lord, my feeble, trembling soul
 Pleads humbly, Make me whole,
 'Tis Thee I seek:
 Stretch thy kindly hand to me
 And bring me close to Thee,
 I am so weak.

Merit none have I with Thee,
But Thou hast thought of me,
In endless love;
Send a beam of light each day,
To guide my feet the way,
To Thee above.

Then my quickened soul may see
What Thou wilt do for me,
O Christ, the Lamb;
And the life made dear to Thee
Shall henceforth be to me
A pleasing psalm.

When by grief or pain I'm tried,
If Thou are by my side
To hold me up;
With my hand secure in Thine,
Inspired by love divine,
I'll drink the cup.

GOD REIGNS

Clouds and darkness round about me,
Heaving billows 'neath my feet,
Open, Lord, mine eyes to see Thee
Reigning on Thy mercy seat.

And if troubles sore o'ertake me,
Pressing sharp my burdened heart,

Wilt Thou lift my spirit to Thee,
Kindly healing sorrow's smart?

When life's silver thread is broken,
And the soul shall take its flight,
Trusting Thee shall be the token
Of a joy that knows no blight.

GRACE TO HELP

Grant me, ever helpful Saviour,
Such a measure of Thy grace,
That though trials oft assail me
I may say with beaming face,
Rich possession,
"Grace to help in time of need."

And when tender ties are severed,
Health departs or fortune fails;
When I fear death's sharpened arrows,
I may know how this avails,
Blessed comfort,
"Grace to help in time of need."

Sure of aid in daily living,
Why should I show discontent?
Take away the zeal of having
Strength not needed ere it's sent,
Sweet assurance,
"Grace to help in time of need."

PATHWAYS TO GLORY

Our sorrows and trials we fervently pray,
That faith being tested they'll soon pass away;
But if at our word they refuse to depart,
In mercy, O Saviour, speak peace to the heart.

A cross in Thy lot and a crown won by Thee,
No crosses for us then, no conquests have we;
The calmer we are in the burdens we bear,
The clearer our titles, crowns brilliant to wear.

There's weakness in us, but no weakness in
Thee,
O, grant us, we pray Thee, the strength that
shall be
A pledge of new hope on our wearisome way,
From out of the darkness and into the day.

In moments of languor allurements may come
To slacken our zeal in the race we're to run;
The tempter may say in the guise of a friend,
"On Christ for true comfort no longer depend."

Most surely our hearts and our lips may de-
clare
Bereavements may come, but we will not de-
spair,
The world ne'er can grant us the needed relief,
The Saviour will carry our burdens of grief.

Yea, each setting sun as it sinks in the west
 Enkindles new hopes of a home of the blest,
 Revealing to view on a scroll in the sky
 Our sorrows as pathways to mansions on high.

YE ARE GOD'S TEMPLE

My Maker bade me rear a home
 Of jewels, gems and precious stone,
 Where I might find the sweetest rest
 In fellowship with Him as guest.

To build a palace for the King
 I found ere long I could not bring
 One single treasure fit to grace
 The grandeur of His dwelling place.

I had no ground on which could rise
 A temple reaching to the skies;
 Within my heart I had no love,
 Commending me to God above.

My life from sin I could not free,
 That He might deign to dwell with me;
 I had no gems of moral worth,
 My life was tainted from its birth.

From sin I sought through Christ relief;
 He kindly bade me go in peace;
 I pledged to make my life a home
 For him who sits on heaven's throne.

CHRIST CALLING

Jesus came from God above,
Bearing messages of love
From our Father's throbbing heart;
Saying, "I will grace impart,
Cease in paths of sin to roam,
Journey to your Father's home."
I reject Him—can it be!—
Him who came to earth for me?

In a world where sin is rife,
Jesus lived a holy life,
Bidding us His children be
Like to Him in charity—
Gentle, kind, forgiving, true,
Choosing right in what we do,
I reject Him—can it be!—
Him who counsel gave to me?

Saddened souls Christ came to cheer;
With His hand He dries the tear;
On His heart He bids us rest
Till we reach our home, the blest,
Where amid the saints we'll meet
Christ upon His mercy seat.
I reject Him—can it be!—
Him who sweetens life for me?

Christ the Lord to set us free,
 Shed His life on Calvary,
 And to those redeemed from sin—
 Cleansed without and pure within,
 Death can have no pang or dread,
 One in Christ, their Living Head.
 I reject Him—can it be!—
 Him who died on Calvary?

Risen Saviour, Lord of Light,
 Thou shalt judge the world by right,
 From Thy throne all men shall hear
 Words of wrath or words of cheer,
 Fixing what their state shall be
 Through the long eternity.
 I reject Thee—can it be!—
 Thee, the future judge of me?

GOING HOME

O Mother, dear, I'm thinking of the tale you
 told
 Of Enoch, one who walked with God in days of
 old
 Until while they together sweetly walked alone,
 The Lord in kindness took His weary pilgrim
 home.

You know that ere life's hopes were crushed
 within my heart,

In agony I prayed that we might nowise part
Until in love I twined a garland round thy
 head,
Made from the recollections of our sainted
 dead.

And now, alas ; like echoes from a distant sea,
Nightly in vivid, troubled dreams there come to
 me
Angelic voices which in chorus sweetly sing,
"O wearied one, come to the palace of the
 King."

Such voices, loving daughter, which in song you
 hear,
Perhaps may be no more than thrills of hope
 and fear,
The blended echoes of our fervent, tearful plea
That Christ would have a home prepared for
 you and me.

O Source of life and peace and hope, what
 means this sigh,
This quiv'ring pulse, this labored breath, this
 sightless eye?
Oh, grant, I pray, that voice or smile or nod at
 last
May prove that from our home its treasure has
 not passed.

O Father, as on earth all friends at death must
part,
"Thy will not mine be done," but to my throbbing heart,
Wilt Thou in mercy send, I pray, some earthly friend,
To furnish love and guidance till I reach life's end?

O Mother, dear, directed by a brilliant beam
I slowly walked until I reached the narrow stream,
Where, lo! a boatman, lapping water with his oar,
Asked of me, "Shall I row thee to the happy shore?"

Then hopefully I gazed upon the distant light
Whose dazzling brightness cheered my heart
but dimmed my sight
And cried "I'm called of God, O boatman, take me home,
I am so cold, so weak, so utterly alone."

While with fond hopes I watched the rower lift his oar,
There came to me in accents mild from off the shore,

108 "BE OF GOOD CHEER"

"My friend, return to earth, thy work is not yet done.

I'll call, yea, call for thee when thou thy crown hast won."

MISSIONARY HYMN

Star of the Morning, the promise of noonday,
Scatter the darkness that broods o'er the earth,
Grant to the nations a light on their pathway,
Brilliant in splendor and priceless in worth.

Father, Protector, our friend on life's highway,

Broaden our efforts and magnify power,
Lest in the toil of the on-coming midday
We may not meet the behest of the hour.

Beacons of light are now piercing the darkness,
Kindled by those who repose in the grave;
Now we inherit the cause in its vastness—
May we endeavor earth's millions to save.

Many, in blindness, are groping for sunlight,
Hoping some message of guidance may come
Ere they are lost in the gloom of the midnight,
Helpless and hopeless, despairing, undone.

Owing Thee service as consecrate workers,
Lord, in return for compassion from Thee,

For the relief of those needing kind helpers,
May we each answer, "O Saviour, call me."

Then to the erring, bowed low in contrition,
Freely confessing they're sadly alone,
We'll make report of a marvelous mission—
Jesus empowered to pilot men home.

MY FRIEND AND I

I.

In early youth my friend and I,
When hearts were fresh and hopes were bright,
Constructed castles in the air
From quiv'ring beams of radiant light.

Inlaid with pearls and costly gems,
These witching forms with sparkles dight,
So like to smiles from beauty's shrine—
Inspired, enthused me with delight.

Imagining the gorgeous view
Gave promise of an end of strife,
In ecstasy of joy, I cried,
"Ah! that's the vision of my life."

These dazzling gems betoken wealth
In which men's longings find surcease;
The gleams of light, ensuring fame,
Enswathe my soul in robes of peace.

My friend exclaimed, "Yon looming cloud,
Within its dark, portentous folds
Will soon conceal, perhaps may quench,
The bounding hopes the vision holds.

"Resembling scenes on ocean wave,
These rapt'rous pictures day by day
Awaken thrills within the soul
And in a moment pass away.

"The worlds that dot immensity
Perhaps have jewels rare in worth,
But with our eye in search of these
We fail to win the gems of earth.

"As suns that shine from far-off skies
Shed feeble light on half-blind eyes,
As sight grows dim to gems in hand
If set on gleams in Fairyland,
Why hope that rays from distant moons
Shall turn our midnights into noons,
Or gazing on some distant sphere
Will aid in reaping blessings here?
They bid adieu to all that's great
Who while they crave enlarged estate
Are stumbling in their earthly race
By gazing into empty space."

II.

Air castles fall and Syrens call:
Shall I reside at Pleasure's side?

As all the dreams of sunny youth
Have one by one lost wonted power,
I stand enchanted with the smile
Of pleasure in her charming bower.

Within the sheltered nooks of life,
With wooing voice she bids me quaff
The foaming bowl of joys untold,
And sport and hope and sing and laugh.

Her votaries, she testifies,
Yield meekly to her fond embrace;—
Their troubles, trials, rebuffs and woes
Are sweetened by her smiling face.

As year by year—each sad and drear—
The hungry vultures in the heart
Have sighed and moaned incessantly,
I pray they all may soon depart.

If Pleasure will but still their cry
By her enchanting, magic voice,
I'll choose her as my constant guide
And in her triumph will rejoice.

"Those who on Pleasure's ocean roam
Are ill at ease 'til they reach home,
While those, my friend, on calmer sea
Are undisturbed, where'er they be.

"As near the hills of Arctic snow
Few plants, save scentless lichens grow,
So out on Pleasure's unblessed ground
Life's sweetest blooms are seldom found.

"Though diamonds from polluted bed
May glitter on a culprit's head,
No gem procured from Pleasure's field
Can to its wearer honor yield.

"On soil volcanic fires have strown,
'Tis true some kinds of plants are grown,
Yet forces in the crater's womb
Can readily consume their bloom.

"Yea, even ere they leave their guests,
Can shake the base on which life rests,
For where these burning currents pass
They leave a blackened, smold'ring mass."

III.

As Pleasure dies my faith revives;
When life is past shall I be cast
On Time's lone shore forevermore?

Beneath an aged, giant tree
That stood beside the rock-bound sea,
My friend and I a-musing lay
While gazing on the fading day.

With fourscore years and whitened head
I'm younger than this tree, I said,
And this is younger than yon reef
Whose age plays truant with belief.

The rocky reef this current laves,
Whose forms were chiseled by the waves,
An infant is, compared with earth,
Which cosmic forces brought to birth.

Yet e'en the earth itself is young—
A new-born child of yonder sun,
And that is but a youthful star
Amid the suns that gleam afar.

The setting sun, oh, wondrous sight!
Has gathered up its rays of light;
Ah! do these fading beams portend
That we on earth find here an end?

"My friend, into the great Beyond,
In ceaseless heaving currents pour
All greatness, power, fame and wealth,
And leave no ripple on the shore.

"Upon its heaving bosom surge
In silence and in mystery,
The glad, the sad, the king, the slave,
To an unending destiny.

"This world of ours, its story told
In smile, or tear, in hope, or fear,
Shall pass out on the thick-veiled sea
Whose echoes mock the human ear.

"The sun, with fires extinct, shall be
Existent still—as certainly
Submissive to a will supreme
As smallest wave on mountain stream.

"As reef and sea, as earth and sun
Age after age their courses run,
Does reason tempt the heart to fear
That all man's hopes shall perish here?

"Since forward points the hand of Fate
And change oft ends in higher state,
Why understand man's death to mean
Extinction in the great Unseen?"

And will the Infinite First Cause,
Who rules in love by unchanged laws,
Dismiss the soul to spheres unknown?
Or will He bring it to His throne?

“These billows, which with deafening roar
Are dashing on this rocky shore,
In coming from the distant deep
To break and perish at our feet,
Remind us of a boundless sea
Where waves are forming ceaselessly;
So life, which now with rush and roll
Is throbbing through each human soul,
By passage to this earthly sphere
To toil and suffer, hope and fear,
Reveals to us an unseen sea
Where spirits live eternally.”

Ah! does the grandeur of the sea,
As it foretells a life to be,
Unveil within the Great Unknown
A hand divine to guide us home?

“Yea, water from the ocean wave,
Tho hidden in the mountain cave,
Through unseen courses seeks the sea,
The home for it fixed by decree.

“The sun that sets on western sands
Soon sheds its light on fairer lands,
And roses from an Arctic night
May quickly bloom in summer light.”

As I but strove to do the right,
Exempt from censure in man's sight,

May I presume that I may gain
A portion where the happy reign?

"As flowers that failed to bloom this year,
May be in bloom another year,
As seed that fell on unturned earth
In changed conditions may have birth,
As ore thrust in the furnace cold
May issue thence the purest gold,
So hearts made true by love divine
In moral excellence may shine.

"The cultivated vineyard yields
More precious grapes than do the fields;
And yet as e'en the barren plain
Is blessed with sunshine and with rain,—
We fondly hope there may be found
Outside the fruitful closure ground,
Some fruit which matchless love may bring
Within the storehouse of the King."

EVER TRUE TO THEE

Lord, I come before Thee now
To renew the vow
Which I gave on bended knee,
Off'ring pledge that I would be
Ever true to Thee.

I have wandered, Lord, from Thee,
 But most tenderly
 Hast Thou called again to me,
 Conscience pleading that I be
 Ever true to Thee.

Hopefully I humbly bow
 To renew my vow;
 And in fervent love for Thee,
 In my weakness may I be
 Ever true to Thee.

Lest again I go astray,
 From the narrow way,
 Tempted by an earthly guide
 From Thy care and from Thy side,
 Lord, with me abide.

CONDESCENDING GREATNESS

Jehovah “maketh clouds His chariot
 And walketh on the wings of wind”:
 Then will majestic greatness deign to be
 A refuge on life’s stormy sea?

“My friend, ‘within the hollow of His hand’—
 Above the waves of anguish borne,
 In passage to an ever cloudless land—
 Our God will shield us in the storm.”

Alas! since "righteousness and judgment are
The habitation of His throne,"
And I in tortuous paths have roamed afar,
How can I find a peaceful home?

"Be calm: God says, 'I'll guide thee with mine
eye';
And while we're walking by His side,
Along the lighted paths where duties lie,
We'll find the joys of peace abide."

"As dust upon the balance—but a drop—
God counts the nations of the earth":
Why then should I expect that He will pause
To still the throbs that grief may cause?

"Forsooth, 'God numbers hairs upon the head,
And feeds the ravens when they cry';
For countless hosts—the many sainted dead—
He dried the tear, allayed the sigh."

Ah! as the fringes of God's robes touch me,
The while I walk in paths of right,
I ask from out the shrouded mystery,
Beyond the darkness is there light?

"My friend, right through the low'ring sky
there shines
A glory on our earthly way,
And tho to us it seems but darkened lines,
It marks a path to endless day."

LONGINGS

There's a hope I am longing to gain,
 When I'm near to the mercy seat,
 That the Master, repeating my name
 While I'm lying low at His feet,
 Shall instruct me to work in the field,
 With the called and equipped and blest,
 Who are gath'ring the sheaves of the yield
 For the garner of endless rest.

There's a faith that I long to attain,
 It's a faith that is strong and true,
 Which inflames me with zeal to obtain
 The reward of the favored few,
 Who by doing the all they can do,
 Have a place with the truly blest,
 In a kingdom, the better, the New,
 Where remaineth for them a rest.

There's a life that I'm anxious to reach,
 When I've ended my journey here;
 It's a life that's beyond the lone beach,
 With its struggle of hope and fear;
 It's a life where the issues are sure,
 Where affections no longer shall roam,
 But the thoughts are eternally pure
 And the soul is in peace—at home.

JUL 3 1911

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